

ANIMATION WORLD

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Vol. 2 No. 4

Comics & Animation



Interviews with StanLee and Ben Edlund
Censorship in Comics
Schodt on Manga
Annecy Review
Plus: Hercules!

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Cover: Ben Edlund's *The Tick* animated series. © Fox Children's Network.

Correction:

Recently it came to the Editor's attention that "The Digital Demand: California Governor Pete Wilson Proposes A Scholarship Initiative," published in the June *Jobs and Education* issue, contained a misprint. Dave Master was not making a comment on or related to the Governor's program but was rather issuing a statement on the general status of art education on a broad national and international spectrum. Since the article focuses on Governor Wilson's proposal it is inappropriate to include Mr. Master's comments, which were unrelated to the Governor's proposal. The revised article is now on-line for view. We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this oversight may have caused.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Heather Kenyon, Editor-in-Chief

This month's topic of Comics and Animation proved to be fascinating but has uncovered some unpleasant news about the state of the comic world in the United States. The comic book industry is not particularly thriving. Obviously down from its record mid-1980s high the industry continues to shrink. More perilous is that the problems continue to compound and further damage the industry.

Up until 1987 the comic industry was booming - unnaturally booming. Comic sales were up as a craze swept through, emphasizing the collectability of titles (much like the animation art craze of the early 1990s). An average Marvel book could easily sell around 75,000 to 100,000 copies. Some titles sold almost 250,000 copies! Then the greed came in and publishers started to print thousands, and thousands of copies of individual titles. Not only did this make these comics less collectible, but as the craze passed, this volume of unsold comics remained, well...unsold. The problem in the comic book world does not appear to be the relatively small number of major publishers or vertical integration, but rather an industry-wide lack of cash flow. Some insiders believe that currently up to 50% of the industry's cash flow is sitting, gathering dust in warehouses. Now, even the large comic book distributors



Heather Kenyon, Editor-in-Chief

are lucky to sell 100,000 copies of any given title. Why? Comic book stores can't afford to stock a large selection of books because readership is down. As a result they do not always have a wide array of product for the consumer, and independents have a very difficult time finding shelf space. Therefore, sales continue to decrease. Many comic book stores have been forced to close their doors, which compounds the problem by reducing the potential sale of books and bring in rejuvenating funds. Somewhere someone forgot about the true comic book fan; the kid who rides his bike down to the local comic store and after purchasing a few precious comic books, a Coke and some candy, returns home.

Another interesting facet of the comic book world is its long

relationship with censorship, especially in the United States. Why do comics incite people so? Susan Alston writes on the current cases that are being wrangled over in the United States justice system. I encourage everyone who is interested in the preservation of the First Amendment to read this article. Comics aren't under fire solely in the United States, however. In early April of this year, a Turkish magazine editor was sentenced to prison for publishing a cartoon that was said to insult Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. Kutlu Esendemir, editor of *Leman* magazine, was given a three and a half month jail sentence and fined the equivalent of \$17 US.

Two new monthly features are being introduced in this AWM issue. In response to the success of our last "Education and Jobs" issue, we are starting a new feature called "The Student Corner." This feature will include information that appeals to the needs of students. (Anyone can read it though if they want!) So, now we want to hear from all of you students out there. What do you need to know? Give us some insight and we'll see what we can do. Another new monthly feature is "Hidden Treasures: Archive Profiles." Each month we will highlight an animation archive or resource so that hopefully it will



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become more useful to our community.

Finally, on a sad note we are including good-byes to two industry greats: Jerry Smith and Phyllis Craig. While working at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, I heard Jerry Smith's name quite frequently but, unfortunately, did not know him past "the amazing man who used to run Fil-Cartoons but retired to race cars." In the past few weeks after hearing from his family, friends and colleagues I wish I had asked many more questions and "discovered" him sooner. He was a pioneer with an amazing amount of knowledge. The stories I have heard in the past few weeks have convinced me that he was truly a remarkable man. The testimonials included only confirm this.

And Phyllis...I met Phyllis Craig at the first Women In Animation meeting. I didn't know who she was but was immediately struck by the statuesque woman who energetically entered the room with flaming red hair, turquoise suit and pink shirt. I later learned that she was a color key artist and thought to myself that she must absolutely live color. When I look at a lawn and see just one shade of green, I thought to myself, she must see one-hundred. At the opening night party of the World Animation Celebration I told Phyllis that and she laughed, saying, "I do. I do see so many colors." Thank you Phyllis for helping us see so much.

Until next month,
Heather

Bonus HTML Features!

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as Quicktime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

<http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awm2.4pages/2.4cover.html>:

- **Both Sides of the Coin: Comics Into Animation**

Take a look at comics and their animation counterparts by Bill Plympton, Todd McFarlane and Christian Clark. Includes Quicktime movie clips!

<http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awm2.4pages/2.4comiccompare.html>

- **Getting Published: A Few Suggested Paths**

Independent publisher Steve Peters, MainBrain's Tom Mason and Dark Horse's David Scroggy give tips on how to see your work printed and in stores. The HTML version includes Dark Horse's submission guidelines for both writers and artists as well as a sample release form. <http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awm2.4pages/2.4surveyhow.html>

- **An Archive Profile:**

- The John Canemaker Collection at New York University**

John Canemaker explains the contents of his extensive newly created archives at NYU. A comprehensive list of the collection's contents is now contained in AWN's The Vault:

<http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awm2.4pages/2.4canemakernyu.html>

editor@awn.com

June 1997

In Praise of June

Your issue this month was EXCELLENT! I think it liked it so well because there was so much information as to suggestions for students and opportunity-type information. Anyway, here are some of my favorite animation books:

Talking Animals and Other People by Shamus Culhane
Encyclopedia of Animation Techniques by Richard Taylor
(You stole my other faves, *Animator's Workbook* and *Chuck Amuck*)

- Mike Rauch

Dear Mike,

Thank you for writing. I'm sure other readers will enjoy taking a look at these books.

Regards,
The Editors

An Unrecognized School

Excellent information, I was so excited to find this link. I was disappointed to not be mentioned as one of the schools in such a top notch publication. CDIS Center for Digital Imaging and Sound in Burnaby BC (Vancouver, Canada) has been producing artists and media professionals for almost twenty years. CDIS has a twenty

thousand square foot multimillion dollar facility utilized for leading edge instruction in CGI, traditional animation and the integrated arts. We also instruct film, video, motion picture cinematography, video game production, multimedia, web masters and sound production. CDIS is an authorized training center for Alias, an SGI training partner and a designated educational facility for Softimage, Lightwave, 3D Studio, Electric Image and many more top products.

Graduates of CDIS work at many places including Electronic Arts, MainFrame (Vancouver), Black Cauldron (San Francisco), Frame Store (London) and many other prestigious companies. We feel we deserve to be mentioned amongst the many schools in your recent articles. Unlike many greedy school entrepreneurs, we have not hiked up our tuition because of the almost desperate demand for qualified people. Our tuition remain thousands and sometimes tens of thousands cheaper. (Approximately \$6,500 US per year). This is not done at the expense of quality training. In fact CDIS is tops in training hours, class size, and equipment access. I thank you for your time and look forward to your response.

- Niels Hartvig-Nielsen
Executive Director, Center for Digital Imaging and Sound

Dear Mr. Hartvig-Nielsen,

Thank you for dropping us a line and letting us know about you. I am sure this information will be useful to a large number of our student readers, especially since the issue stressed the positive future in computer animation.

Thank you for taking the time to e-mail us and please, feel free to send us further information regarding your school and alumni.

Sincerely,
The Editors

In the Loop

I feel that now I have registered to receive the *Animation Flash Newsletter* and all that goes with it, I will be Really With It, In The Loop, On Top Of Everything, and In The Know.

- Nancy Grimaldi

Dear Nancy,

You're absolutely right! You will be! Thank you for joining our ever growing list of readers.

Sincerely,
The Editors

Stan Lee: Comic Guru

by Michael Goldman

Stan Lee can't understand it. "What is taking the Pulitzer Prize Committee so long to call me?" he wonders. "They know where I am. They know how to spell my name. Their letter must have gotten lost in the mail." Lee then breaks into a robust laugh at the thought that his writing career, as prolific as it has been, should merit a Pulitzer. But for a legion of middle-aged adults and teenagers alike who have grown up on a steady diet of *Spider-Man*, *The Hulk*, *Fantastic Four* and *Silver Surfer*, among others, some sort of prize for Lee most certainly would be in order. After all, Lee is not only the person who created or co-created many of the most popular comic book characters of all time, he is also godfather to the modern comic book industry. Over the course of his 50-plus-year relationship with Marvel Comics, he has created a new methodology for writing and producing them. Lee has also been a central player in bringing Marvel super-heroes into the animation realm.

Indeed, as Chairman of Marvel Studios and Publisher and Chairman of Marvel Comics, the "seventyish" Lee is still doing his best to keep Marvel's creative juices bubbling. These days, he concentrates on story development and works with



Stan Lee.

the writers of all televised Marvel-based shows, especially when they first debut to help keep them consistent with Marvel standards. His role is now to develop animation and feature film scripts for the big screen, rather than for the newsstand. Lee is not currently writing any Marvel comic titles, although he does write the syndicated *Spider-Man* newspaper comic strip. "I spend most of my time in the office working on movies, television shows and animation," says Lee. "I'm not involved with the comic book operation day-to-day anymore. But I do keep my hand in it, and I regularly talk with our people in New York about characters and stories. Plus, I spend a day or two at home each week writing scripts and other projects I hope to see developed. I dream of the day we do a major animated film based on a Marvel super hero," with *Thor* or

Namor, the Sub-Mariner being the two titles he thinks would best translate to the big-screen in animated form."

Marvel's Animated Hits

Lee sees animation as a great forum for his classic characters. His interest in animation goes back to the 1970s, when he began living in Hollywood part-time in order to supervise development of the original *Fantastic Four* program, which was then animated by DePatie-Freleng Enterprises. Eventually, at his urging, Marvel established a permanent animation operation in Los Angeles in 1980. Lee has worked full-time out of this L.A. office ever since, even as Marvel has gone through various ownership changes.

"I was the editor. I was the art director. I was the head writer. So because of that, for better or worse, I had my personality stamped on those comics."

Marvel's corporate fate remains up in the air following attempts to restructure Marvel Holdings Inc. after a six-month war for company control between financiers Ronald Perelman and Carl Icahn. However, the value of the Marvel character library virtually insures the company will continue in some form, and



X-Men, the comic book from Marvel ...

plans to bring Lees classic characters to new media formats continue unabated. "I stay out of all that business stuff because my area of concern is the creative end of things," Lee says. But he does point out that animated TV programs based on Marvel characters continue to perform to solid numbers on television, with the *Spider-Man* cartoon being one of the most successful animated shows in history. "Our animated product does very well," he says of shows such as *Spider-Man*, *X-Men* and *The Incredible Hulk*. "The business area is where they were having problems, not with the product. Our shows generally do very well and our comic books are still very high quality, and that's the most important thing as far as I'm concerned."

Indeed, Marvel toons remain a major factor in childrens television with *Spider-Man* and *X-Men* being very popular. Marvel Films Animation did the animation production on *Spider-Man*, while Saban produced *X-Men*. Both shows continue to air on Fox. Although they

are now out of production, 75 *X-Men* episodes and 65 *Spider-Man* episodes are in the can. Meanwhile, New World Animation continues to churn out new episodes of *The Incredible Hulk* for an upcoming second season on UPN. All future animated Marvel shows, most notably *Silver Surfer*, currently being prepped to begin airing in '98, will be animated by Saban and will air on Fox. Besides *Silver Surfer*, Lee says another vintage Marvel character is being prepped for a television try. Unfortunately, he can't yet say which one. But no matter the show, the animation company or the network, Lee will continue to provide creative input on all programs, especially in that crucial development phase.

Lee has been a central player in bringing Marvel super-heroes into the animation realm.

Lee is also gratified that, after numerous snafus over the years, some Marvel characters will finally begin hitting the big screen in live-action film formats. *Blade, the Vampire Hunter*, starring Wesley Snipes, is in the final stages of production for New Line Cinema and is slated for a February, 1998 release. Legal wrangling continues over James Cameron's plans to make a *Spider-Man* film, but industry sources expect those issues to be resolved and the film to be eventually made. Several other Marvel properties are in development at major studios, with *X-Men*, *Silver Surfer*, *Fantastic Four* and *The Incredible Hulk* all close to going into production.

The Good Ol' Days and "The Marvel Method"

For Lee and most of his fans,

though, it all began with comics, and without the fertile creative explosion that occurred at Marvel in the early 1960s, the worlds of animation and feature films would be without some major action characters. Of course, when Lee was running "The Mighty Marvel Bullpen" in those "good old days," the comic book industry was much different than it is now. "When I was based at Marvel in New York, for a period of seven or 10 years, I had to write just about everything," he says. "I was the editor. I was the art director. I was the head writer. So because of that, for better or worse, I had my personality stamped on those comics. I was designing covers, writing cover blurbs, writing ads, the soapbox column, the Bullpen page, and so on. That's why those comics had a style that was connected to my personality. If any one person was doing that job in those days, those comics would have reeked of that person's style. It wasn't like I had a master plan to put my imprint on them. Now, they don't do comics that way anymore. There is a different person doing everything. The stories are done by different writers all the time. The artwork is done differently. There is not so much of a unifying thread. The editor-in-chief doesn't have the time to put his imprint on the books anymore. He's usually too busy making sure everything is on time for the production schedule, so he doesn't



...and a scene from the animated series by Saban.

have time to get as involved in other things."

But Lee was the person whose imprint got onto those characters, and it has stayed there ever since. Fresh out of high school, he originally answered an ad seeking an assistant in the publishing industry. "I thought that meant books or magazines," says Lee. "It never occurred to me until I got there that they were talking about comic books. In those days, I didn't know much about comic books, but I figured what the hell, maybe I can get some experience and then get out there into the real world." Lee was so unsure of a comic book career, in fact, that when he first started writing for Marvel, he adopted the pen name of Stan Lee. He thought he shouldn't use his given name, Stan Lieber, on "mere comic books when I was hoping to do much more important writing later." Of course, he ended up doing his "important" writing on comic books for decades, and eventually, he had his name

legally changed to Stan Lee.

When Marvel editors Joe Simon and Jack Kirby left the company (years later, Kirby would return to team with Lee in the most fruitful comic collaboration in history), Lee suddenly found himself as lead editor before he was 18. A few years later, he went into the Army, but came back to the same job and has been with Marvel ever since. Before the '60s, Lee tried writing western comics, romances, war stories and humor essays. Then Marvel decided to concentrate on super heroes and Lee created or co-created characters such as Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, The Incredible Hulk, the X-Men, the Iron Man, The Avengers, Silver Surfer (based on a Jack Kirby concept), and a host of others. This brought about good news and bad news. The good news was, Marvel's pedigree soared. The bad news was, it meant Lee and his Marvel teammates faced a virtual tidal wave of non-stop work. That's when he decided a new comic book production method was needed, and what is now referred to as "The Marvel Method" was born.

"What happened was, in those years, I was writing *Fantastic Four*, *Hulk*, *Spider-Man*, and a few other titles, and I simply couldn't keep up," Lee explains. "Up until then, the artists couldn't get started until I gave them a complete script, and I couldn't get scripts together for the various artists on the various books at the same time. So we sometimes had guys standing around, everything took longer and I was getting exhausted. So I came up with the idea of meeting with the artists and giving them the general story information in order to get them started before I had a script. In a half



Spider-Man faces his creator.

hour or so, I could tell them the plot, who the villain would be, what the problem the hero faces is, how he resolves it and how many pages it should be. Then I would ask them to draw it any way they saw fit. That not only kept the artists busy, but more important, it allowed them to contribute to the story in different ways. They might draw the scene with more depth than I envisioned it, and when they handed me the artwork, I could then fashion captions and dialogue that went along with that art. It ended up giving us greater continuity, and after a while, it became clear we were getting better stories. With this method, we used my story talent, the artists' visual talent, and then I could fit in appropriate dialogue and captions after the art was done. That became known as the Marvel style. I started doing it for expediency and ended up with better comic books. Now, virtually all of the comic book companies do their books this way."

Industry Woes

Marvel remains a comic power, despite its recent financial struggles. The advent of new technology and new avenues of entertainment have eaten into the comic book industry. Economic factors such as the growing cost of paper and ink have also made comics less affordable for youngsters. But Lee believes there is room for comic books, cartoons, CD-ROMs and the Internet to exist



Fantastic Four is now being developed into an animated series.



A team of artists now create the art for comics like this recent issue of *Iron Man* published by Marvel.

side-by-side. Creativity, he insists, remains the key. As a consequence, he is concerned about the increasing violent, adult content of comics and the movement away from good, old-fashioned story-telling with characters to which kids can relate. His philosophy is to create characters that, except for their super powers, are usually normal people with normal problems. For example, Spider-Man's alter ego, Peter Parker, is constantly worrying about how to make money and finish school. Lee feels these human elements are being dropped by many modern comic books. "Some of the new comics are good and some are bad, just like anything else," he says. "That's the way it was for us in the old days too. But the problem is the new type of books are a lot grittier, a lot darker, and more violent. The reason for that is understandable. That's the way movies are. It's the way television is. It's the way video games are and it's the way newspapers are. In that sense, comics are no different than

any other form of entertainment: they reflect society. The world today seems darker and grittier and so do comics, but because of that, their appeal is more limited. They aren't always appropriate for younger readers and there aren't always characters that readers can relate to."

Another problem, Lee says, is that since comic books are now mass produced, characterization and consistency are going by the wayside. "Many titles, both ours and the competition, take it for granted that you know everything about the character and his background," he explains. "If you aren't a regular reader, it is almost impossible to pick one up and know what is going on. The books have become hard for the transient reader to pick up and enjoy, and as a result, it is harder to lure in new readers. They tend to cater to the hardcore reader and forget that it is important to bring new readers into the fold. I've talked with our people in New York about fixing this with Marvel, but it is an industry-wide problem."

Lee believes there is room for comic books, cartoons, CD-ROMs and the Internet to exist side-by-side. Creativity, he insists, remains the key.

Whatever the future holds for his beloved "super powered children," Lee couldn't be happier about his past and present. He credits the support of his wife of 50 years, Joan, the hard work and talent of colleagues he has worked with, especially fellow comic book legends Kirby, Steve Ditko, John Romita, John Buscema, Gil Kane, Gene



Stan Lee with his "super-powered children" at a recent promotion for Marvel Mania, a comic-themed restaurant.

Colan and Don Heck, among many others, and a lot of luck with helping him get to the top of the comic heap. "I've been lucky all my life," he says. "I've always worked with people I liked and respected, and who were extremely talented. I'm also lucky in other ways. I'm lucky I answered that ad all those years ago. I'm lucky Marvel decided to concentrate on super hero books, and I'm lucky the readers liked what we were putting out there. I'm sure guys like Chuck Jones don't regret they went into the animation business, and in my case, I certainly don't regret going into the comic book business. I would advise writers or artists to go into comics or animation, but only if they really love doing it. That's the only reason I've been in it so long: I love doing it. I don't know what I would be doing today if I hadn't gotten into this business, but I'm sure it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun."

Michael Goldman is a Los Angeles-based writer and editor for a variety of publications, who has super-powers and fights for justice in his spare time.

Tick Fever Endures: Ben Edlund Talks About the Evolution of Everyone's Favorite Blue Superhero

by Deborah Reber

When I was 17, I didn't have a driver's license. Laziness or complacency I assume. So in order to get anything done, I had to go where everyone else was going before they would drop me off. And so, I was constantly going to the comic book store with friends who had licenses," explains Ben Edlund on how he developed a love for comics. Hence, the early beginnings of a lucrative career as writer and creator of *The Tick* comic book, television show, and possible feature down the road. The 28-year-old Massachusetts native now lives in Manhattan's hip Lower East Side, and recently met with me at a favorite haunt to talk about his rise to "limited, useless fame" over a bowl of tortilla soup and a Rolling Rock.

"There was a point where I was working on my own comic, which was a kind of pedantic sort of boy superhero, retro kind of comic. I was about 17 years old," recalls Edlund. One of the side characters of this comic was The Tick, a 300 pound, seven-foot-tall, blue tick. Edlund was given the chance to develop this naive and "nigh-invulnerable" protagonist when New England

Comics (NEC), a retail comic book store based in Boston, asked him to do some gag drawings for an upcoming issue. A last minute change in their production schedule however, paved the way for a full comic issue dedicated to Edlund's character. For the next year and a half, Edlund worked on *The Tick* #1, developing his "big, dumb do-gooder," whose battle cry is "SPPOOONNN!!," while studying film at the Massachusetts College of Art.



Who is this 300 pound blue bug? © Fox Children's Network.

The Coming of the Tick

The Tick comic book was an instant hit, and it acquired a large and loyal following, despite the fact that only a few original stories were published. "I strung *The Tick* fans along with a minimum amount of material - twelve issues in five years," says

Edlund. He attributes the comic books' success to the attention given to the particulars. "They are very detail intensive, so there are a lot of connected storylines. It was also densely written as far as comedic ideas are concerned, so each issue that came out provided a reasonably enjoyable experience for the reader."

"Every once in a while Kiscom would call me and I would go have a free lunch..."

Kris Boose, owner of a comic book store in State College, PA, can't keep the trade paperbacks on the shelf. "It astounds me that *The Tick* has steam rolled so long on the strength of its characters and sharp-witted humor," says Boose. "He [Edlund] has created a unique and very entertaining parody of today's superheroes."

While still in college, Edlund was approached by Kiscom, a New Jersey-based toy licensing and design company. Kiscom had noticed the popularity of *The Tick*, and hoped to create a merchandising phenomenon like the one



An issue of *The Tick* comic book. © New England Comics Press

launched by *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* a year earlier. Despite this interest, and talks with studios and television networks, none of the big players were initially interested in the show. "At the time, I just went back to college. Every once in a while Kiscom would call me and I would go have a free lunch with some representative of some large company, and that would be it. Finally, we got connected with Sunbow, who decided they wanted to develop this thing and hand it off to Fox Children's Network," says Edlund.

Beginning Production

Sunbow Entertainment, a small animation company based in New York, paired Edlund up with writer Richard Libmann-Smith. Though neither Edlund nor Libmann-Smith had specific animation or television experience, the two brought their unique strengths to the table and collaborated extremely well. Developing the first episode gave the team their first battle with "decision by committee." For two

months, they worked tirelessly on the premiere, trying to incorporate everyone's point of view, but neither of them were happy with the resulting script. Their instincts were right. Fox turned it down, threatening to drop the show if a better script wasn't produced in five days' time. "Richard and I went to his place for the weekend and worked straight through. We slept maybe two or three hours every twenty-four, and pretty much did instinctively what we wanted to do, because at this point there was no committee to say 'yes' or 'no.' Luckily, Fox liked the new script very much. So we kind of defined in one weekend exactly where the show went for that first season, which was cool," says Edlund.

"So we kind of defined in one weekend exactly where the show went for that first season, which was cool."

Considering Edlund's typical work style (he is notorious for working at his own speed and ignoring deadlines), the transition to the fast-paced world of network television was relatively painless. He was concerned that his character might be compromised or altered beyond recognition because of executive influence but, unlike some comic book to television evolutions, the animated version of *The Tick* remained true to its comic roots. A few of the darker characters were removed, as well as some sexual undertones. But overall, the series kept the spirit originally intended.

"Nothing was lost in the translation," says comic store owner Boose, "not the vision of the creator or the appeal of the characters. The show

itself has continued to build new fans and keep the demand for the comics strong."

Edlund feels that because the show never reached the level of success that *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* had, their merchandising empire fell apart the first season out. "That's essentially good as far as I'm concerned," he muses, "although I would be much more wealthy at this point. That failure, to me, makes *The Tick* a much more sincere proposal."

Edlund was very hands-on during the production process, and insisted on being involved in every aspect of the show. "There was a period where I was extremely attentive to everything that had to be solved, and these efforts ultimately made the show a year late. I saw the storyboards that were being done and realized that if *The Tick* were animated off of those, it would fall apart. It would be a shadow of what it is now, which is something that isn't massively successful, but has this real staying power. So now instead of looking like bad '90s animation, it kind of looks like bad '70s superhero animation, which definitely has a unique style about it," explains Edlund. Despite his desire to be central in the process, Ben considers himself an extremely collaborative person, and isn't too



The Tick and his sidekick Arthur watching TV. From the animated series, *The Tick*. © Fox Children's Network.



Another superhero character from *The Tick* animated series. © Fox Children's Network.

proud to let other people step in and make contributions to the shape and design of the show, as long as the changes improve the product.

A Success Story in Blue

So how has the unexpected success of *The Tick*, all stemming from some high school sketches, affected Ben Edlund? He claims he hasn't changed much. Since *The Tick* was not an overnight success, he had plenty of time along the way to adjust to the changes and stay grounded. "When it first started, it was fairly slow. First you're doing a comic book. Then the comic starts to do well, and you start seeing your name in magazines, and you become accustomed to a certain level of fame. And then five years pass and suddenly someone wants to make it into a TV show."

By the time the show debuted in fall 1994, Edlund viewed himself more as a television professional than as a comic book writer. The process itself had transformed him. These days, Edlund is spread so thin over a host of film and TV projects that he sometimes has trouble finding the energy to put a stamp on an envelope and drop it into a mailbox. While fans pressure him to continue cranking out more issues of the comic book, Edlund has been clear about the future of *The Tick*.

He explains, "I'm probably going to do only one more issue, and it's very much on the back burner. I view it as being a kind of summation of my position on *The Tick* character. At the time [*The Tick* was created] I was a virginal, middle-class, white, uninterested student of film, whose favorite filmmaker was Steven Spielberg. So I

was really a much different person when this character was fully formed. So far he's proven to be fairly pliant, because the level of subtext and sophistication has matured. And that's probably why it connects with so many people from different age groups," Edlund says.

"I'm probably going to do only one more issue, and it's very much on the back burner."

A spinoff of the comic is currently being written by a longtime friend of Edlund's, due for a summer 1997 release. While the show is no longer being broadcast on Fox Kids Network, it can be found in syndication on the popular cable channel Comedy Central, where it is performing extremely well. Fox is also in discussion with Sunbow Entertainment about producing a *Tick* primetime special, and the possibility still exists that Fox Kids will renew the half-hour show for another season. Although Edlund admittedly has mixed feelings about the prospect of another TV season, he sees it as the missing link between having a canceled television show and actually coming out with a feature film version. Yes, though it is behind a few other Fox projects, including a sci-fi animated film that Edlund is scripting, an ani-

mated feature is in development.

When asked about "going Hollywood," Edlund laughs, "I have a certain amount of detachment in real life, and that same amount of detachment allows me to take very little of the entertainment world seriously." But it seems as though the industry is taking him seriously, and that is giving Ben the chance to explore new creative ventures, including directing and writing a live-action remake of the classic *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*. He's wanted to do the project for years, but only recently has found himself in a position to make it happen.

As we walked toward the subway together, I thought about how *The Tick* has certainly been the springboard for Edlund's career. Now that he is moving onto new projects we can await his new, entertaining, sophisticated and genuine characters. Hopefully there will always be a little *Tick* somewhere in what he does.

Deborah Reber has been an Animation Development Consultant with UNICEF for the past two years, and currently oversees the Cartoons for Children's Rights campaign, as well as other animation advocacy activities.

Dreamland Japan: Manga's Paradise

By Maureen Furniss

Frederik L. Schodt is the author of two highly respected books on Japanese comic art, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* and *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, as well as numerous articles. The following interview focuses on one of the subjects explored in these two books, the way in which the consumption of manga, or print comic books, provides insight into Japanese culture. It was conducted with him via e-mail in June 1997, during one of his frequent visits to Japan.

The Scope of Manga

Maureen Furniss: A press release for your recent book, *Dreamland Japan*, states the following statistics: "almost 2 billion manga books and magazines were sold in Japan in 1995, which means over 15 manga-related items for every person in Japan. The manga industry boasts \$6 billion in annual revenues, which amounts to a staggering \$50 spent on manga for every Japanese person." Your book makes it clear that, in this case, practically "every Japanese person" is actually a consumer of Manga. How would you account for the widespread popularity of manga in Japanese society?

Frederik L. Schodt: I don't think there's any single answer. Here are a few theories, though.

1) For hundreds of years Japanese

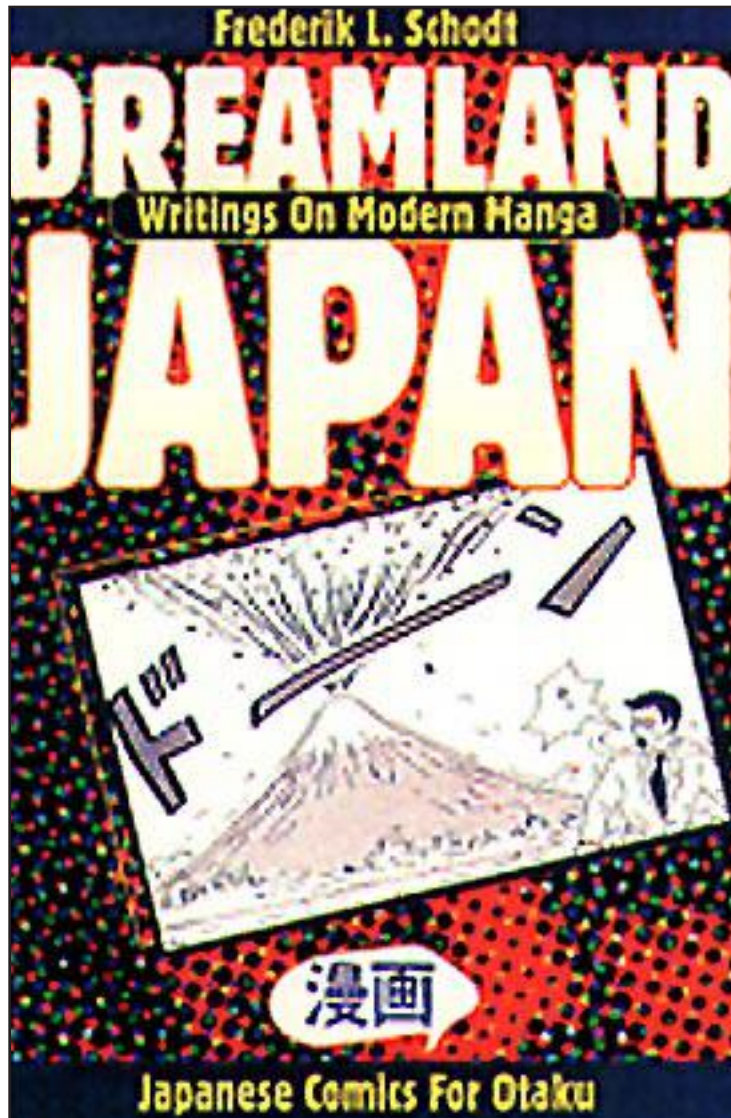
people have loved art similar to modern manga, such as scrolls, woodblock prints, or sketches.

trains during a long commute to work or to school, and today a huge number of people in Japan spend a great deal of time on trains.

3) There may be aspects of the Japanese writing system that help people create manga, as well as enjoy them. The ideograms used in Japanese writing are a type of cartoon, and require a high level of hand-eye coordination to render; it may be one reason little children in Japan all seem to be so good at drawing manga. These ideograms also help foster a high level of pattern recognition skills at an early age.

4) The manga industry has not been subjected to the type of direct or indirect censorship that has existed in some other countries. For example, the manga industry in Japan never experienced the "witchhunt" that took place in the United States during the 1950s, when the Comics Code Authority was created. The Comics Code Authority was instituted by publishers in response to pressure by religious groups, educators, politi-

cians, and those members of the general public who felt comics contributed to juvenile delinquency and general moral corruption. The Code helped the industry avoid some criticism, but stifled creators by strictly regulating the content of stories. The result was a glut of patriotic "superheros" fighting for good; comics became a creative ghetto and were stigmatized as something for children and immature adults.



Those art forms primarily are composed of line drawings, and often are fantastic, violent, erotic, humorous, and narrative in structure.

2) Manga are particularly suited to the crowded, fast-paced modern Japanese urban lifestyle: they are small, portable, and unobtrusive; they are quiet; and they don't take as much concentration as reading a book. They're perfect for reading on

Publishers started going out of business, sales plummeted, and the industry has never recovered.

In Japan, however, despite periodic anti-manga movements, the industry has been able to ride out the rough periods, and retain a very free-wheeling creative environment. Comics are not regarded as something just for children, but read by nearly everyone. The industry also was very successful early on at establishing a symbiotic, rather than competitive relationship with television, through the animation of popular manga stories.

5) Most important, manga are fabulous entertainment!

For hundreds of years Japanese people have loved art similar to modern manga, such as scrolls, woodblock prints, or sketches.

A Realm of Genres

MF: Personally, I am quite interested in the fact that females make up a significant portion of the manga consumers. In many other countries, comic book producers commonly presume that comic books for women would never sell. How do you account for this different point of view?

FLS: I think that Japan conclusively proves that this view, that comics for females would never sell, is short-sighted, and very wrong. The industry in Japan very quickly figured out that if female artists drew manga stories for female readers, there was indeed a market nearly as large as that for males.

MF: The "genres" of manga available to Japanese readers are quite diverse. What are some of the more popular genres being produced today, and how do you account for their popularity? Are there any popular genres you find relatively unique?

FLS: Manga in Japan today have become a full-fledged mass medi-

um, a medium of expression on par with films and novels. As a result, it's possible to use manga to depict anything. But manga are still a form of popular culture, so just as with novels and films in other countries, a great deal of the material being produced is erotic, violent, and often "trash." At the same time, there are works being created that have great beauty, and rival anything being done in novels or films in other countries. Sports and adventure stories are extremely popular with young males and romances and mysteries are popular with women.

One genre that is probably unique to Japan is what are called "ju-ne mono" or stories for young women about homosexual love between handsome young men. Some other very popular genres rarely seen outside the country include manga stories about pachinko gambling and mahjong.

Censorship and Content

MF: In many countries, special interest groups are very concerned with the types of entertainment to which children are exposed. However, in Japan, violence and erotic imagery are fairly commonplace, even in comic books that might be read by young boys and girls. How would you assess Japanese attitudes toward this situation?

FLS: I think you can make a good case for saying that the borderline between adult and child culture is more blurred in Japan than in some other countries. Religion may also have a lot to do with this. As citizens of a basically polytheistic nation, many Japanese people's ideas about eroticism and violence are not as rigid as in the United States, for example, where Christianity still has a powerful influence on what is regarded as acceptable in all arts. Despite the fact that, until recently, in Japan there was more censorship of frontal nudity in material for adults than in the U.S., innocent nudity in children's comics has long been regarded as nothing to worry about, and the same is

true with scatological jokes. But then many fathers in Japan may bathe with their daughters up to the age of twelve or thirteen. Each culture has its own set of values.

Finally, the inherent stability of Japanese society may make it possible for people to worry less about the effects of erotic and violent imagery on children. If the statistics don't show an explosion in crime, it may be harder to advocate cracking down on the content of manga to "protect" children. That said, I don't want to be in a position of defending the excesses of Japanese manga. I think that one of the most disturbing trends in the market is the eroticization of small, prepubescent girls in comics for adult males.

MF: In actual practice, how concerned are Japanese manga producers about censorship of these or other subjects? Can you provide any examples of cases where content created a great deal of controversy or was subject to actual censorship?

There may be aspects of the Japanese writing system that help people create manga, as well as enjoy them.

FLS: Manga producers worry a great deal about content when the content becomes an issue and threatens to negatively affect sales or the company image. Campaigns against excesses in manga occur with fairly regular frequency in Japan, but like a localized wind storm, tend to blow over quite fast. "Censorship" on the part of the government occurs rarely these days in manga, especially since the relaxation of obscenity laws now allows more nudity. Most government officials only get involved in extreme cases, and usually warnings and apologies are the result. Ordinances on obscenity differ according to prefecture as well; several of the huge "fanzine" markets have had to change venues in recent years because the place where the fairs

were originally staged fell under the jurisdiction of very conservative officials.

Publishers have also tended to be rather sensitive to any material that raises too many foreign eyebrows. In the last ten years or so, stereotyped depictions of blacks in Japanese manga have become an issue, as did a series called "Rapeman" which was perceived as glorifying rape.

Manga in Japan today have become a full-fledged mass medium, a medium of expression on par with films and novels.

Finally, there is a real "herd" instinct in the Japanese media which includes the manga industry. When a problem occurs, people fall all over themselves in an attempt to be seen "doing the right thing." One recent example which does not directly relate to manga (yet), is the sudden concern over violence in the media; not all violence, but specifically any material with references to or scenes of heads being cut or sliced. As I write, the Japanese media is bending over backwards to assuage people's fears over a clearly berserk individual who recently beheaded a school child and stuffed a threatening letter in the heads mouth daring the authorities to catch him. The prestigious *Asahi* newspaper ran a fascinating article today (June 17, 1997) on all of the TV shows that have been pulled by networks because of fears that viewers will be offended by scenes of violence or cutting. Even an episode of the popular "X-Files" was pulled. These things tend to happen in waves in Japan, though, so as soon as the murderer is caught, the pressure on broadcasters will probably end.

Beyond The Current Sphere

MF: Do manga have cross cultural appeal or is the subject matter and, as you say, the "vocabulary and grammar" of the books very specific to Japanese culture? Are there sig-

nificant barriers to their sale in other countries, and is this even a consideration for manga producers?

FLS: Manga are increasingly popular overseas, in Asia, Europe, and North America. Often this popularity is piggy-backing on the popularity of Japanese anime (animation), so that many people now read manga stories to find out more about their favorite anime. The most culturally specific manga generally have not been translated and probably never will be, except in magazines like *Mangajin*, which uses manga as a teaching tool. Some manga genres we're never likely to see outside the country are mahjong and pachinko.

MF: Since the 1960s, Japanese animation has become increasingly popular in Japan and elsewhere. A number of successful feature films have their origins in manga. How do you see the relationship between these two industries? Are there significant aesthetic differences? Does the Japanese consumer see them as separate types of entertainments or as being closely related in some respect?

FLS: The manga industry is sort of a meta industry in Japan today, and it is increasingly the place where new ideas are first presented. If a story is successful in printed manga format, it is then turned into animation and sometimes live-action theatrical features. In a way, it's a very neat system, because it enables producers to do a cost effective form of market research. If a story has been enormously popular as a manga, producers know that it will have a strong chance of success in other media.

MF: What is your prediction for the manga industry in the next ten years? Do you see any Japanese changes in society affecting subject matter, readership or formats?

FLS: The manga industry has peaked in Japan, and we are unlikely to see much more explosive growth. When over a third of all published books and magazines are

manga, there simply isn't a whole lot of room to grow. The only possibly underdeveloped areas are manga for senior citizens and the overseas markets. We'll see more and more attention being given to developing both of these. Manga also have more and more competition these days from video games, movies, and the Internet, and unfortunately, readers are getting busier and busier while there are still only twenty-four hours in a day.

The manga industry has not been subjected to the type of direct or indirect censorship that has existed in some other countries.

MF: Any new books on the horizon?

FLS: I don't plan to bring out any new books on manga for awhile (they take a long time to write!), and I'm hoping that two should suffice for now. Stay tuned for other books, though.

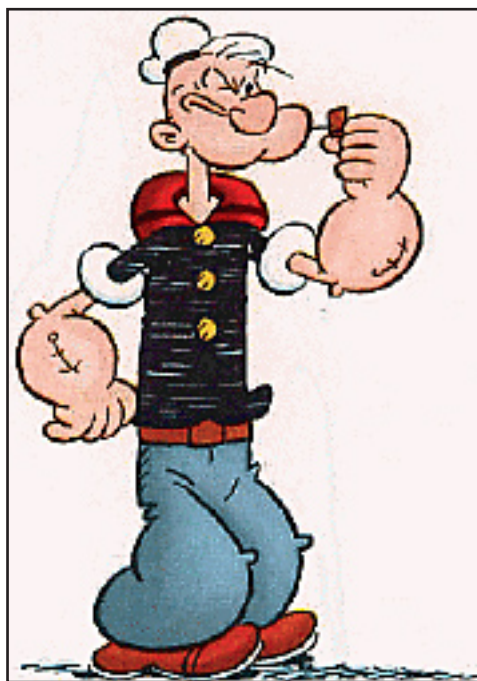
Frederik L. Schodt's book, *Dreamland Japan: Writings On Modern Manga*, is available for US \$16.95 from Stone Bridge Press, P.O. Box 8208, Berkeley, CA 94707. E-mail: sbp@stonebridge.com.

Please visit Frederik L. Schodt's web site at <http://www.jai2.com>.

Maureen Furniss is the Editor and Publisher of Animation Journal, a scholarly journal based at Chapman University, in Orange, California, where she is an Assistant Professor in the School of Film and Television.

Popeye From Strip To Screen

by Mark Langer



Popeye. © King Features Syndicate Division.

Popeye the Sailor, one of the most enduring characters in animation history, began not in motion pictures but in E.C. "Elzie" Segar's "Thimble Theater" comic strip. Born in Illinois, Segar began cartooning in Chicago in 1914. Graduating to his own strip for the Chicago American, Segar was then hired in 1919 by Hearst's New York *Evening Journal* to create the syndicated "Thimble Theater" strip. "Thimble Theater" depicted the adventures of Ham Gravy, his girlfriend Olive Oyl and her brother Castor. The venture was a success, expanding to an additional Sunday color page in 1924. Segar's comic strip used complex, rambling and frequently eerie narratives that attracted a devoted following, but

it lacked strong central characters. In the "Thimble Theater" of January 17, 1929, Ham and Castor decided to hire a crew to sail in search of the legendary Whiffle Hen. Walking up to a grizzled one-eyed mariner on a dock, Castor asked him, "Are you a sailor?" "Ja think I'm a cowboy?" came the reply, introducing Popeye to readers.

The production of the first Popeye film took place in secrecy, the entire cartoon single-handedly animated by Roland Crandall.

Move Over, Ham Gravy

Over a period of months, Popeye developed from a supporting character to the central figure in the hunt for the Whiffle Hen. When Segar finally brought the narrative to a close and tried to retire the sailor, outraged fans contacted the Hearst syndicate demanding more adventures with Popeye. Segar obliged them: the sailor replaced Ham as Olive's love interest, Castor Oyl was reduced to infrequent appearances, and the strip was renamed "Thimble Theater, Starring Popeye."

The early 1930s was a period of keen competition among American animation studios for market share. Central to the business strategy of most studios was the development of cartoon "stars" whose popularity

would ensure bookings by major theater chains. Disney followed the success of Mickey Mouse by developing new characters like Donald Duck and Goofy up from supporting roles in Mickey Mouse cartoons. Similar strategies were tried at Warner Bros., where Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck evolved from secondary roles in films starring other animated characters. One of the earliest examples of this took place at the Fleischer Studios, Inc. in New York, where the unpopular starring canine character Bimbo was matched up with a girlfriend in *Dizzy Dishes* (1930). The girlfriend eventually developed into Betty Boop, the studio's major character. With the popularity of Betty Boop at a peak in 1932, brothers Max and Dave Fleischer decided to introduce a new film series which would include another character to grow into a star. Fleischer rival Van Beuren



Olive Oyl ditches her beau Ham Gravy for Popeye. © King Features Syndicate Division.



A recently issued stamp from the U.S. postal service paid tribute to the classic comic character.

Corporation had already signed an agreement to bring Otto Soglow's strip "The Little King" to the screen. Max Fleischer, who was a great fan of Segar's strip, approached Hearst's King Features Syndicate for the right to use Popeye. The two companies signed an agreement on November 17, 1932.

Betty Introduces Popeye to the Big Screen

The production of the first Popeye film took place in secrecy. Veteran animator Roland Crandall was given space apart from the rest of the studio. There, he single-handedly animated the entire cartoon, aided only by the inclusion of some Shamus Culhane animation recycled from the earlier *Betty Boop's Bamboo Isle* (1932). The results were so satisfying that even before the film was released, the Fleischers and King Features amended the agreement granting the studio the right to produce and release animated cartoons featuring Popeye for a five year period.

Crandall's film *Betty Boop Presents Popeye The Sailor* opened in the summer of 1933 as part of the "Betty Boop" series. After a prologue in which newspapers herald the sailor's film debut, and Popeye sings "I'm Popeye the Sailor Man," the film featured what was to be the standard "Popeye" series plot, re-enacted with variations by the Fleischers

for the next decade. Olive waits for Popeye to disembark from his ship at the dock. Bluto follows the couple to a fairground, where the two sailors compete for Olive's attentions through feats of strength. Bluto abducts Olive and ties her to a train track. As the locomotive approaches, Popeye and Bluto fight. Popeye defeats Bluto, and, through the magical powers of spinach, is able to stop the train and save Olive Oyl. Here, we see the essential difference between the Segar and Fleischer sense of narrative. Segar reveled in picaresque plots that coursed in unexpected directions for up to two years, exploring every novel twist and nuance of narrative. In anticipation of post-modernism, the very concept of plot was old-fashioned to the Fleischers. Hackneyed and ritualized story conventions were torn apart, recombined in odd juxtapositions, and satirized in endless variations.

By 1938, Popeye replaced Mickey Mouse as the most popular cartoon character in America.

The Fleischer Popeye cartoons were an instant success. "It might have been just a fluke, a lucky break, that the Segar characters fit the Fleischer style so well," recalls former Popeye animator Myron Waldman. "The animation of Olive Oyl in the mid-1930s was perfect. It fit her. The character had no elbows and the most prominent knees. When she spoke, the voice fit too. This was character. That's what made her so good."

Step Aside, Mickey

Segar's characters were not the only things consistent with the Fleischer

style. Both Segar and the Fleischer staff shared a fondness for a poetically improvisational language. When Popeye's original voice artist, William "Red Pepper Sam" Costello, left after the first few pictures, he was replaced by a studio in-betweener named Jack Mercer. Much of the dialogue of the Popeye cartoons was post-synched with little attention to synchronized mouth action. Mercer, Mae Questel (Olive's voice, except for the 1938-41 period, when Margie Hines was the voice artist) and William Penell or Gus Wickie, who voiced Bluto, often ad-libbed dialogue during recording sessions, particularly Popeye's "asides" and pun-filled conversations. Added to this was a progressive softening and increased complexity of Popeye's character, paralleling changes in the strip. Popeye cartoons became the Fleischers' leading attraction. By 1938, Popeye replaced Mickey Mouse as the most popular cartoon character in America.

The Fleischers rummaged through the Segar strip for supporting characters. Bluto, the animated series'



Popeye's new sweetheart? From *The All New Popeye* animated series currently in production. Photo courtesy of The Locomotion Channel. © King Features Syndicate Division.

antagonist, was a minor character in the Segar strip, appearing only in 1933's "The Eighth Sea." Longer-lived strip characters that joined Popeye on the screen included hamburger maven J. Wellington Wimpy, Swee'pea, Eugene the Jeep and Poopdeck Pappy. While in the comic strip, Popeye gained his great strength from rubbing the Whiffle Hen, the Fleischers added the gimmick of Popeye's power being largely dependent on the ingestion of spinach. Farmers in America's self-styled "spinach capital" of Crystal City, Texas set up a statue of Popeye in gratitude for the publicity.



From *The All New Popeye* animated series currently in production. Photo courtesy of The Locomotion Channel. © King Features Syndicate Division.

As early as 1935, the Fleischers sought backing for a feature-length animated film from their distributor Paramount. Paramount refused to risk money on a feature. In an attempt to persuade the company that longer animated films could be profitable, Max Fleischer initiated the production of three two-reel color "specials" starring Popeye, beginning with *Popeye The Sailor*

Meets Sinbad The Sailor (1936). Although these "specials" were often billed over their accompanying feature, Paramount still refused to back the animated feature.

The success of the black and white Popeye cartoons on television in the 1950s inspired revivals of the series by Gene Deitch, Halas & Batchelor, Jack Kinney, and Hanna-Barbera.

Conditions changed after the success of Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and the Fleischers received money for the eighty minute *Gulliver's Travels*. According to some sources, the film was originally to have Popeye in the role of Gulliver, but the idea was scrapped early in the planning stages. Perhaps this was unwise. According to internal Paramount correspondence, the Popeye shorts were far more profitable to Paramount than Disney's films were to his distributor, RKO. The sailor's box-office appeal might have helped the Fleischer features. *Gulliver's Travels* (1938) and the company's next feature, *Mr. Bug Goes To Town* (1941), bombed, leading to the failure of Fleischer Studios, Inc.

Post-Fleischer Popeye

The successor company, Famous Studios, continued with the production of Popeye cartoons. Many of these were remakes of earlier Fleischer films. Much of the supporting cast of the Fleischer versions were replaced by new characters, such as nephews Pip-Eye, Peep-Eye and Pup-Eye. A redesign of the major characters included white U.S. Navy uniforms for Bluto and Popeye (in keeping with their war-time service in the armed forces),

and more comely fashions for Olive. Upgraded technology, including the introduction of color to the series in 1943 with *Her Honor The Mare* and 3-D in *Popeye The Ace Of Space* (1953), tried to rejuvenate the series. None of these strategies were able to breathe much life into the films. *Spooky Swabs* (1957) brought theatrical release of Popeye films to a close.

The success of the black and white Popeye cartoons on television in the 1950s inspired several revivals of the series by such talents as Gene Deitch, John Halas and Joy Batchelor, Jack Kinney, and Hanna-Barbera. Hampered by limited budgets and rushed production schedules, none of these came close to the Fleischer or Famous theatrical versions. The less said about Robert Altman's live-action feature with Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall as Popeye and Olive Oyl, the better. What has endured are the original qualities of the Segar and Fleischer works. In fact, Segar's strips have been reissued by Nostalgia Press and the Smithsonian Press. The earlier Fleischer films, which shared the shabby urban or surreal exotic locations and working-class orientation of the Segar originals, retain a vitality and charm that still appeal to a large group of devoted fans today.

Mark Langer teaches film at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He is a frequent contributor to scholarly journals and a programmer of animation retrospectives

Global Trends: It's a Tough World Out There for Native Comics

by John A. Lent

Fans, students and creators of American comic books are a rather narrowly-focused lot. They concentrate on the smallest details about favorite superheroes, rehash the same historical and anecdotal facts/opinions about series and titles, and, in the process, add to the myth of the genre. Seldom do they look beyond the borders of the United States to acquaint themselves with a wider comic world. Granted, they have paid some attention to comic books from other parts of the world when they have impacts upon or connections with those of the U.S. Thus, they know about Moebius, or the British and Filipino cartoonist invasions, or, in recent times, the craze for Japanese manga (comic books) and anime (animation). But missed are comic books from most of the rest of the world. This essay aims to provide insight into comic books worldwide and discuss the trends and problems facing these local industries. First, the author will concentrate on areas where he has recently interviewed, like Asia, and will then apply these trends to broader, global concerns.

Asia's Many Comics Forms

To speak of comics on a continent or sub-region level in a generalized fashion is risky, if not misleading. Comic books come in various genres, sizes and formats which preclude easy categorization. Take Asia for example. In comics-rich Japan, manga take on all shades and hues, defying pigeon-

holing into standard genres. Over the years, there have been samurai warrior, *unka* (shit, defecation), *rorikon* (Lolita complex), *sarariman* (salary men or workers), *redikomi* (ladies with sex fantasies), *pachinko* and *mahjong* (games), and *june* (for young women but featuring stories of love between men) genres. Hong Kong comics also use many, more standard sounding, genres, such as comedy, romance, ghost, and social or gangster/crime stories. Gambling and kung fu are other genres that Hong Kong has contributed as well. For years, Philippine *komiks* were dominated by *nobelas* (serialized stories, one of which lasted for more than a decade) and *wakasans* (short stories complete within an issue of a *komik*). However, more recently, the depleted Philippine economy has not allowed readers to purchase *komiks* week after week, thus the preference is now for *wakasans*.

Similarly, one cannot generalize about the formats and sizes of Asian comics. In Sri Lanka, comics papers (their term for comic books) have 16 pages and 14 stories; each serialized story is given only a page and each is drawn by a different artist. Myanmar comics are large, usually 10 to 80 pages and either of a 5x7 or 7 1/2 x 9 inch format. Some are written and illustrated entirely by one person, others by three or four. Japanese *manga* are the size of U.S. metropolitan city telephone books in number of pages and for-

mat, and contain little dialogue. In Hong Kong, Jonesky (Chinese name, Tin Ha) brings out its comics in two versions: one visual with the artwork, the other in the form of textual novels. Bangladeshi comic books come in two varieties based on paper quality: white paper or the cheaper newsprint. Those in Thailand are distinguished by variations in size: traditional and pocket.

To speak of comics on a continent or sub-region level in a generalized fashion is risky, if not misleading.

All types of production systems exist as well. In Thailand, the largest comics publisher, Bun Lour Sarn, brings out 14 different titles timed so that a new one appears every five days. As a result, the company retains 30 cartoonists who work with editors and writers to come up with the themes they eventually draw. Philippine cartoonists and writers work on a regular freelance basis with one of three large comics publishers. Some draw five to eight weekly series. One of India's most prominent and prolific comics artist, Pran, works out of a home studio. There, he and a small staff draw a variety of strips, disseminated first to 20 newspapers and magazines through his own syndicate, and then collected into comic books by India's premier comics publisher, Diamond. South Korean comic

books, until the mid-1980s, were confined to a feudal-like system. A master cartoonist would lord over a studio of apprentices, all producing books of serialized stories under his name and in his style, meant for thousands (15,000 at a time) of comic book rental shops. The birth of comics magazines (about 20 existed by the mid-1990s), the very recent use of retail bookstores as comics outlets, and the increased purchasing power of youth, have profoundly altered the industry, causing a severe slump in the rental business, the production of fewer titles with larger paid circulations, and the Koreanization of characters and plots that in the past were Japanese-derived.

Australians, for example, still feel a deep concern about the impact of American comic books, as do Germans, East Europeans, Latin Americans and others.

What is popular also changes from country to country: love and romance in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, humor in Myanmar and Thailand, fighting and Kung Fu in Hong Kong, adventure in Bangladesh, Malay historical or warrior adventures in Malaysia, and sci-fi with ancient Chinese or Buddhist themes in Taiwan. In fact, Asia abounds with success stories in the comic book field. In Malaysia, *Gila-Gila* maintains the second largest magazine circulation in the country. In Singapore, the once-a-year *Mr. Kiasu* comic book has been spun off into dozens of products which may have become more visible than the book. In Taiwan, Tsai Chih-chung has adapted Chinese classics into a comic book format, in the process, selling more than 30 million copies throughout Asia. In Japan, *manga* sell over 1.5 billion yearly.

Finally, in the Philippines, *komiks* plots and characters still figure in a large proportion of local films.

Problems Within the Business

There are a few constants concerning comics in Asia, however. One of which is a foreign presence; whether it is that of American in the Philippines and elsewhere, of Japanese in Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, or of Indian in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In a number of countries, the first comic books were U.S. imports. As a result some of the first and subsequent local works were clones of those in the West: *Taong-Gagamba* (*Spider Man*), *Lastic Man* (*Plastic Man*), *Kapteyn Barbell* (*Captain Marvel*), or *Bulko* (*The Hulk*) in the Philippines. *Immad* and *Gila-Gila* magazines were imitators of *Mad* in Bangladesh and Malaysia, respectively. In other countries, foreign comics still dominate. Doraemon, Asterix, and Disney titles are redrawn and translated by Vietnamese artists who disguise the work as their own. Similar titles appear on a regular schedule from about half a dozen Indonesian publishers. Sometimes the threat, however, comes from closer to home. In Bangladesh, the few existing comics publishers complained that Indian comics have plagued their new industry, not just the importation of them, but also their illegal printing within the country by pirate publishers. Clampdowns in Taiwan and Korea have aimed at stopping both the importation and the publication of their pirated comics.

Other problems plague comics in Asia, including a perceived lack of respect for the medium and its creators, the heightened competition for audience provided by television, video and other new media, fluctuations in economies that lessen readers' purchasing power, disproportionate

shares of profits eaten up by distributors, and the lack of larger, foreign markets because of language limitations.

Affects of a Nearing Global Community

Some of the trends and problems associated with Asian comic books can be applied elsewhere. Australians, for example, still feel a deep concern about the impact of American comic books, as do Germans, East Europeans, Latin Americans and others. In Germany, during the bad business year of 1996, only the larger comics companies showed profits, mainly because they publish many U.S., French, Belgian and Japanese titles. Polish comic books also faced an uphill battle as American comics flooded in after the fall of Communism. A number of local books sprang up, but only lasted a year because of outside competition, a weak economy, a lack of interest by publishers, insufficient comics magazines where artists can sell their work, and an unwillingness by book shops to sell comics. Nevertheless, through efforts similar to those of American fandom pioneers, titles keep appearing and are promoted through fanzines, a comics creators convention, and a comics group in Lodz called Contour. In Macedonia, American comics are popular to the extent that of the two magazines publishing local comics, one is called Disneyland. During the days of a united Yugoslavia, at least three or four agencies functioned solely to import U.S. comic books.

In parts of Latin America like Chile, comics creators are trying to shed foreign, mainly U.S., influences. However, they are stymied in their efforts to move ahead because of competition from American comic books. Those who thrive, such as

Mauricio de Souza of Brazil, often have done so by imitating North American commercialization methods such as converting their books to animation, merchandise lines and hitting the international market. In Argentina, the Comic Creators association was formed in 1995 to promote national comics through new production and distribution methods.

Much of the economics of comics publishing is related to broader trends, such as those of international trade regulation, globalization, commercialization, and cross-fertilization/media imperialism. Certainly tighter copyright laws, brought on through threats of trade restrictions, have made comics piracy more difficult in parts of Asia. The continued U.S. embargo of Cuba has severely affected comics publishing there, as cartoonists have been forced to leave their homeland.

During the past decade and a half, the lightning speed of the internationalization of cultural forms and their centralization into fewer transnational corporations have caused justifiable concern. The global culture that these conglomerates promote is shaped solely by marketing considerations as they strive to control all aspects. They create the images and also the material and cultural products associated with them like: toys, that reproduce the company's television and film characters; comics and animated cartoons that incorporate a product sponsor within the storyline; comics conglomerates that move characters in guest appearances in and out of their books, often at the loss of creativity and credibility; and comics that take a homogenized appearance from country to country. The U.S. trend of comic book producers merging with each other, distributing firms, and larger media giants, is being followed in other regions, bringing results of syn-

ergistic monopolization, standardization of contents, and the narrowing of those chosen to be arbiters of public taste.

During the past decade and a half, the lightning speed of the internationalization of cultural forms and their centralization into fewer transnational corporations have caused justifiable concern.

High levels of commercialization now inundate comics industries of the world, so that merchandising has become the end-all of cartooning, more important than the work of art itself. Cartoonists everywhere complain that the quality of work has diminished at the hands of corporate cartooning. In China, one of the most famous cartoonists/animators, Zhan Tong, said that for cartoonists to get lucrative jobs with commercially-oriented concerns, they had to draw cartoons that would not "jangle anyone's nerves" (meaning safe, bland cartoons). Meanwhile, a professional artists body in the Philippines declared that the quality of comics has deteriorated because of the necessity of cartoonists to speed up the creative process and make more money. In Japan, manga publishers rationalize that it is not important to draw panels in great detail as the average reader only spends a second or two with each page. Slovakian and other comic artists have attributed the lower quality to publishers and editors who know how to make money, but not how to critically evaluate a work of art.

Another trend is that of comics cross-fertilization, also termed media imperialism in some circles. The origins of comics in different countries and subsequent shifts in emphases of themes

and styles, are often traced to influences from elsewhere. For example, the international connections between European and U.S. comics have remained strong for more than 50 years; the industries often feed on each other. When the relationship between two countries' comic producers becomes imbalanced, heated debates flare up about the homogenization of culture, obliteration of local values, and the killing off of the indigenous comics tradition. Such complaints have been heard from cartoonists in at least the Caribbean, Kenya, South Africa, all parts of Asia, and Brazil.

Steps have been taken to assure a place for local comics, with the launching of humor and cartoon magazines (particularly in Turkey and Malaysia), the loosening of censorship laws, the tightening of copyright regulations, and the augmented professionalism of cartoonists. For example, Brazil has had a law since 1983 obligating all comic book publishers to print 50 percent Brazilian titles with native authors. Also throughout the world, publishers have taken comics beyond the children's realm by creating adult titles, often with sexual and violent themes, and developing books, whose aims can range from teaching gourmet cooking (Japan) to eradicating AIDS (South Africa). We can only hope that these small steps will help preserve each country's unique style of comics against an onslaught of obstacles.

John A. Lent is Professor of Communication at Temple University, in Philadelphia. He is also the editor of Asian Cinema, the journal of the Asian Cinema Studies Society, which he also chairs, and managing editor of Witty World International Cartoon Magazine.

Censorship In Comics: Is This the United States?

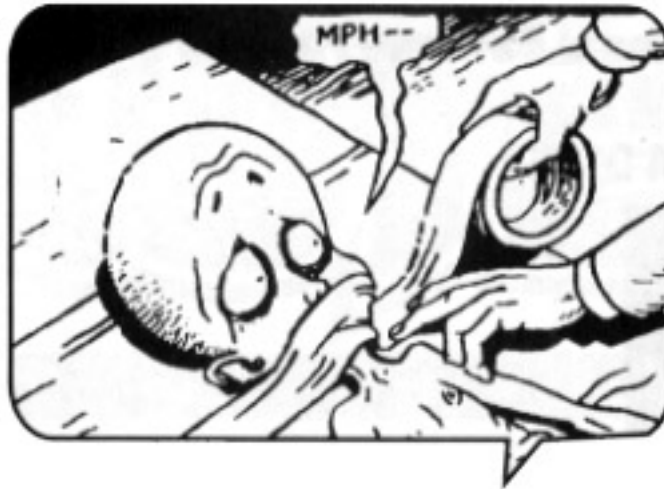
by Susan Alston

When the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) is mentioned, two questions almost always immediately follow. Many people ask what the CBLDF is. Well, we are a non-profit, charitable organization that protects the First Amendment of comic book professionals in the United States of America. However, our Articles of Incorporation specifically state it to be as follows:

"The purposes shall be for charitable, educational and literary purposes, specifically defense of constitutional rights relating to speech and press, and from relief from arbitrary discrimination by authorities concerning the literary subject matter."

The other popular question is, 'Is there really a need for the CBLDF?' As you will read, the answer is most definitely, "Yes, there is." Censors, mostly in the form of parental concern groups, specific right-wing religious organizations, police detectives, and the 'politically correct,' tend to pick on the comic book industry because they still view comics as solely products for children. Thus adult/mature comics are deemed inappropriate, or even ille-

gal, to be made available in the same establishment as children's comics. It is our goal to protect all comics from censors.



A Short History Of Censorship In Comics And The CBLDF

In the 1950s, Dr. Fredric Wertham published *Seduction of the Innocent*, a book purporting that comic book reading causes juvenile delinquency. In true McCarthy-era fashion, the U.S. Senate held hearings to investigate Wertham's claims. A new Comics Code Authority was formed prohibiting any controversial comics. As a result, the most innovative company of the decade, EC Comics, was forced to cancel most of its line. This includes titles like *Vault of Horror* and *Tales From the Crypt*, which years later are judged as classics.

Beginning in the late '60s, the underground comix movement shirked the constraints of main-

stream publishing. Heavily influenced by the EC line, especially *MAD Magazine*, underground cartoonists like Robert Crumb, Gilbert

Shelton, and Robert Williams produced an acclaimed body of adult work. In New York, one of their titles, *Zap #4*, was prosecuted for obscenity. The trial lasted several years and went through numerous appeals. In

1973, the comic was

finally ruled obscene and banned. (Since then, *Zap #4* has been sold in New York without prosecution and the work of its creators has appeared in the Museum of Modern Art and other galleries.)

In the 1980s as an outgrowth of the underground, alternative comics flourished with publications like *RAW*, *Love & Rockets*, and *American Splendor*. Cartoonists Art Spiegelman, Dave Sim, Will Eisner, and others won widespread recognition for their ambitious work. At the same time, creators such as Frank Miller and Alan Moore pushed the boundaries of super-hero comics into more mature territory. Various religious and conservative leaders decry these developments claiming that "comics are for kids."

In 1986, Friendly Franks, a comics store in Lansing, Illinois was busted for selling "obscene" comics. The titles in question are *Omaha the Cat Dancer*, *The Bodysssey*, *Weirdo*, and *Bizarre Sex*. The CBLDF was founded to support the defense. The case moved to the Appellate Court where the store manager was acquitted of all charges.

The Need Continues

Following the Friendly Franks case, the CBLDF became active as a watchdog organization. The 1990s have seen prosecutions of comic shops escalate. Two shops in Florida have been busted. One was accused of selling the adult collection *Cherry Anthology #1* to an undercover officer. The charges were later dropped. The other store went to court for selling a "mature" title, *The Score*, published by Piranha, an imprint of DC Comics, to a 14-year-old accompanied by his mother. The judge ruled in favor of store owner Bill Hatfield. In 1992, police raided Amazing Comics outside of San Diego, seizing 45 titles. No charges were filed. But these are not three isolated events. In other cities around the United States similar situations have happened.

Sarasota, Florida: On May 13, 1992, police arrested the store manager Timothy Parks of Comic Book Heaven, on seven counts of displaying material harmful to minors. The titles seized by police included *The Survivors*, *The Heir*, and *Dark Tales*, published by the now defunct Catalan Communications, *Detectives Inc.*, published by Eclipse, and an issue of the British fanzine *Speakeasy*. In most states, the statute under which he was being charged doesn't exist, however, on November 24, 1993, he was found

guilty on two counts of displaying obscene materials to minors and sentenced to two years in jail. The appeal bond was denied and he remained incarcerated in the Sarasota County Jail for fourteen months. Legal fees exceeded \$26,500.

Rome, Georgia: On February 18, 1993, the Floyd County court found the owner of the Legends comic shop guilty of "distributing obscene materials." The verdict implicated two Aircel comics, *Debbie Does Dallas* and *Final Tabu*, as being harmful to adults. All appeals were denied, and the guilty verdict stands as a precedent against the display of comic books. Legal fees exceeded \$13,500.

"It was the first time an artist had been convicted and sentenced to punishment for ideas and images created from his own imagination." - Attorney, Luke Lirot

San Francisco, California: In 1991, the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) decided that comic book original pages did not have the literary status of an authors manuscript and were instead merely commercial illustrations. Consequently, the BOE claimed that cartoonist Paul Mavrides (co-creator of *The Fabulous Freak Brothers*) owed back taxes for several years worth of publishing royalties. If the BOE had prevailed, all California cartoonists would have eventually been responsible for this tax. This economic handicap would have effectively muzzled an untold number of creators. Mavrides paid the assessed \$1400 in disputed sales tax and fines for comic books he sold in 1990 but challenged the

validity of the assessment through a lengthy — and costly — appeal process. "The money consistently has been the least important matter to me. I was more in fear of the domino effect it would have had both on comic publishers and my colleagues in the comics field." The CBLDF employed literary and tax attorneys to reverse the BOEs ruling.

In a 3-2 vote, the California State Board of Equalization finally agreed with Paul Mavrides' five year long crusade to have comic book artwork qualified (in the state of California) as 'intangible ideas presented in manuscript form' and that, as such, comic art should be exempt from sales tax regardless of the form in which it is delivered to the publisher. Mavrides had been contesting the BOEs erroneous interpretation of a sales tax law — that only prose manuscripts qualified for the exemption — since 1991. Shortly after the decision was announced on January 11, 1996, Mavrides commented, "Its gratifying that, after five years of struggle, the State of California, through the decision of the Board of Equalization, has officially and rightfully recognized that what cartoonists and comic creators trade in are ideas, not pieces of paper." Board of Equalization members proposed changes in the current regulations to clarify that comics are an expression of ideas and thus should be considered as part of an authors manuscript.

"Without the help of literally thousands of individuals along the way, it would have been impossible for me to persevere. Monetary aid, donations to the CBLDF, legal assistance, public statements of protest, press coverage, organizing work, and moral support — each action,



Illustration by Mike Diana.

large and small, contributed to this victory for free speech. My appreciation and thanks to everyone whose steadfast efforts contributed to this significant and precedent-setting victory," added Mavrides.

The legal bills involved in overturning the BOEs initial interpretation of the law that kept Mavrides embattled with bureaucratic hassles were paid for by the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. To date Mavrides legal bills have totaled over \$70,000, of which \$9,500 is still due. It may take another 12 months of aggressive fund raising to finish paying the legal bills for this one case.

Current Studies

The Mike Diana Case

Largo, Florida: Mike Diana, a controversial comic artist, was convicted in March of 1994 for violating Florida's obscenity laws. Mr. Diana was actually convicted for "distribution of obscenity" after a local Florida undercover detective, posing as a contributing artist, enticed Diana to send him two copies of his popular 'zine *Boiled Angel*. The 'zine "movement," a modern descendent of the underground comics of the '60s and '70s, and present-day forum for international artistic collaboration and experimentation, recognizes Diana as a type of cult hero. His

popularity was largely attributed to his reluctance to be intimidated from drawing shocking, graphic and raw depictions of society's most serious problems: child abuse, date rape, inhumanity and intolerance brought about by the abuse of religion.

After hearing that the images drawn and created by artist Diana could appeal to or inspire serial murderers, Diana's original Florida jury found him guilty of producing obscenity. They agreed his work "lacked serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value" because it did not compare to such work as Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* or Picasso's "Guernica," as suggested

Cases

by the prosecution.

As a result, Diana was ordered to spend 4 days in jail while the judge considered his sentence. The terms of his probation require him to pay a \$3,000 fine, undergo psychological evaluation at his own expense, maintain full-time employment, perform eight hours of community service every week, have no contact with children under 18 years of age, take a course in journalism ethics at his own expense and not to draw any "obscene" material while on probation, even for personal use. The last dictum is to be monitored by unannounced inspections of his living premises during which his residence could be inspected at any time, without warning or warrant, to determine if Diana was in possession of, or was creating, "obscene material".

They agreed his work "lacked serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value" because it did not compare to such work as Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* or Picasso's "Guernica"

The only count of Diana's convictions that was determined incorrect by the Appeals Court was his conviction for "advertising obscene material." This decision was based on the fact that Diana requested donations in his *Boiled Angel* #7 to help him create the next *Boiled Angel*. The Appeal Court agreed with Diana's attorney that it was improper to convict someone for advertising material that had not been created yet, since the artist could not, at the time, have "known the nature or character" of his work. Diana's attorney, Luke Lirot, stressed

that this is a critical case because, "It was the first time an artist had been convicted and sentenced to punishment for ideas and images created from his own imagination. This case is important because it will have a dramatic effect on the concept of artistic freedom in our contemporary society."

Diana's reaction to the appeal was, "I continue to be disappointed by my home state of Florida. I am also still very confused about the definition of obscenity and community standards, and how they might suppress my artistic endeavors, especially if I am forced to continue living in Florida during my probation period." Based on the important First Amendment issues involved in the case, Diana and his lawyer appealed his remaining convictions to a higher court. All appeals were denied and the CBLDF, in conjunction with the ACLU of Miami, filed a petitioned in May of 1997 to the United States Supreme Court to consider an appeal of Mike's conviction based on the judgment violating the First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. The costs to defend Mike thus far have exceeded \$50,000.

The Planet Comics Case

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: In March of 1996, Michael Kennedy and John Hunter closed their embattled comic book store, Planet Comics, after months of trials and tribulations resulting from a police raid in September of 1995. Eight weeks after the raid, eight assorted obscenity charges were filed against the owners, stemming from a complaint about *Verotika #4* from a member of the Christian Coalition. The unidentified woman was referred to Oklahomans for Children and Families (OCAF), a non-profit

obscenity watch-dog group, who pursue enforcement of local obscenity laws. They turned *Verotika #4* over to Oklahoma City Police.

Following the raid, Kennedy and Hunter were arraigned in handcuffs and charged with trafficking, keeping for sale and display of obscene material deemed to be harmful to adults, as well as one charge of child pornography for drawings in the book *Devil's Angel* by Frank Thorne. Kennedy and Hunter were then evicted from their six year location and forced to take a less convenient and visible location across town. The financial hardship of the move was further compounded when the first landlord would not permit a forwarding sign on the door and a local Christian organization gloated on local radio stations at their success in closing Planet Comics down.

"I've lost my wife, my house and my store over all of this, I need to step back and rebuild my life." - Michael Kennedy, Comic Book Store Owner

During the next few months sales dropped dramatically as many customers assumed Planet Comics had closed, and many parents would not permit their children to patronize the store. According to Michael Hunter, "sales at Christmas were off 65% ." To further add to the demise of Planet Comics, police again organized a raid, this time on the home of John Hunter, confiscating over 250 personal and business computer discs as well as the store computer. A cinder brick was thrown through the front glass door of the store the following week. Michael Kennedy indicated that "in good

conscience I cannot continue to incur bills if the sales aren't there. I've lost my wife, my house and my store over all of this, I need to step back and rebuild my life. Luckily, thanks to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF), I don't have legal bills to contend with on top of everything else."

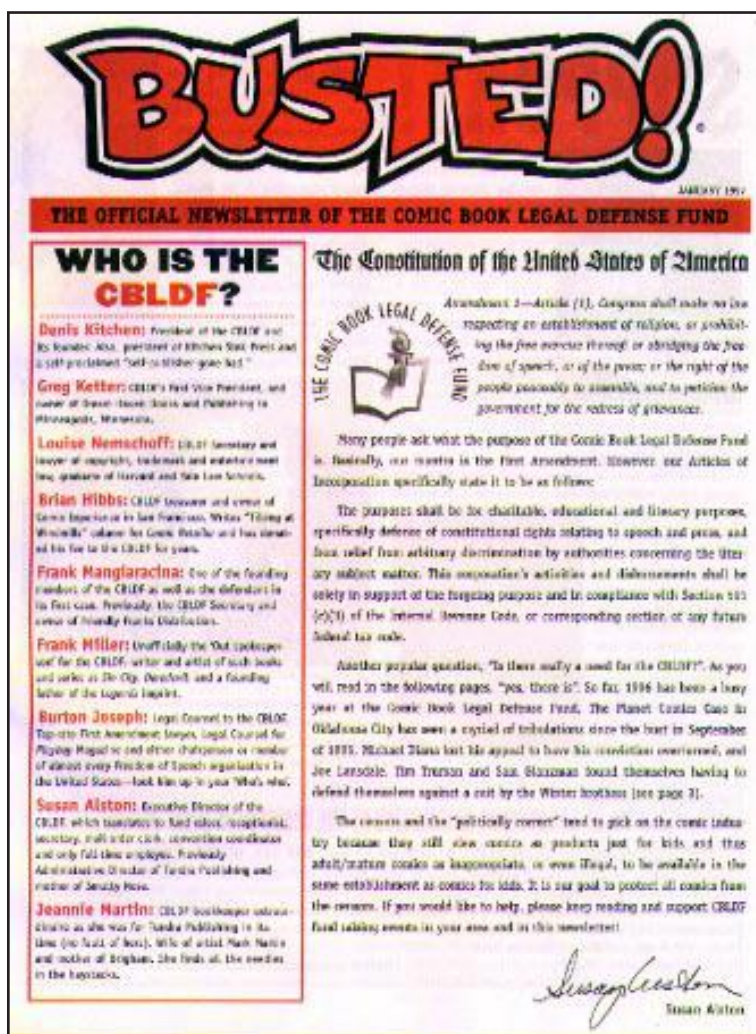
On Friday, April 12, 1996 Judge Larry Jones of the District Court of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma presided over the preliminary hearing for State v. Kennedy and Hunter, commonly known as "The Planet Comics Case." After listening to testimony and hearing oral argument on several motions, Judge Jones announced that the materials seized during the Planet Comics store raid did not warrant felony charges. Judge Jones subsequently ruled that the felony charges against Kennedy and Hunter were not proper, and reduced three of the previous felony counts to misdemeanors. The three misdemeanor charges of displaying material harmful to minors remained intact. The felony charges of possession of child pornography were dropped by the State moments before the Defense's motion to dismiss the charge was to be heard. In short, the charges against Kennedy and Hunter were reduced from four felonies and three misdemeanors to six misdemeanor counts. Three of those counts do not call for imprisonment.

Defense Attorney, Chuck Thornton, commented after the hearing, "It should come as no surprise to anyone that the charges of possession of child pornography against Mr. Hunter and Mr. Kennedy have been dropped. It should be unthinkable to any competent lawyer that such a charge could have been leveled in the first place." The child pornog-

raphy statute in question clearly states that to convict someone for the offense of possession of child pornography the artist must use a human being under the age of 18 as a subject. Thornton further commented "If those in the employ of the State of Oklahoma had taken the time to look at *Devil's Angel*, they might have noticed something quite remarkable — not even a fictional child was portrayed. The entity portrayed in *Devil's Angel* was a demon which exhibited few attributes, if any, of a newborn child."

However, on Monday, April 15, 1996, the State filed its "Notice of Intention to Appeal." In doing this, the State was seeking to reinstate three of the felony charges contained within the State's amended information. Hunter and Kennedy had previously been charged with two counts of trafficking in obscenity and one count of keeping for sale obscene material, all three counts being felonies. An evidentiary hearing was held in the April of 1997 in which the two trafficking charges remained as felonies, but the one count of 'keeping for sale obscene material' was reduced, once again, to a misdemeanor. The trial date is set for September 8, 1997.

In the final analysis, when all the fear-mongering and personal prejudices are stripped away, what are "We the People" so afraid of? Do "We the People" truly believe that someone left alone to write, draw and publish will be able to bring



Busted!, the official newsletter of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

this Great Republic of ideas, and ideals, crashing to ruin here at the outset of its third century of existence? The incidents that you have just read about are real, and they happened here in the United States of America, creators of the Bill of Rights. Let me remind you of the United States of America: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for the redress of grievances." What part of this do some people not understand?

If the details of the above incidents and cases alarm you, you can send for more information or make a donation to help cover the still outstanding \$25,000 in legal bills for these defendants. You can reach the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund at P.O. Box 693, Northampton, MA 01061. Please also check the CBLDF web site for more information and merchandise that supports their mission: <http://www.edgeglobe.com/cblpdf>

Editors Note: The CBLDF site does contain content that is very graphic in nature and is not necessarily for everyone. However, it is important to note that this material has just the same right to exist as any other. Even more importantly when viewing the artwork it is crucial to put it into its proper context. This is not artwork that is shocking just to be shocking. It is an individual artists reaction to his world. For instance, Mike Diana's caustic artwork is his reaction to a current social injustice that he finds so vile he was compelled to depict it as thus in order to bring attention to the problem. These pieces have social relevance and their addition continues to keep our society questioning itself.

Susan Alston is the Executive Director of The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

Strip-Mining For Animation

by John Cawley

As *Zippy the Pinhead*, *Silver Surfer* and *Men In Black* are about to enter the arena of animation, modern producers may think they have found a new gold mine for animated properties in the world of comics. These new executives do not realize that animation was born from comics and has been linked to them by an umbilical cord ever since.

The origins of animation come from creators who were popular magazine or newspaper cartoonists. James Stuart Blackton, Emile Cohl, Winsor McCay (perhaps best known due to his *Gertie The Dinosaur* in 1914 and later *Little Nemo In Slumberland*), and John Randolph Bray created the modern animation industry with a variety of animated shorts and series based on original ideas and those found in their comics.

Bringing the Print to Life

Bringing characters from printed comics to the screen (and vice versa)



Silver Surfer, the comic book published by Marvel,...

has never been a guarantee of success. Such popular newspaper comics of the teens as *The Gumps*, *Mutt and Jeff* and *Krazy Kat* were all adapted into animation. Most of these were met with indifferent results. Far more popular were original creations such as *Koko the Clown*, *Felix the Cat* and *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit*. In fact *Felix the Cat* moved into printed comics which actually outlasted the popularity of the original films.

The origins of animation come from creators who were popular magazine or newspaper cartoonists.

With the advent of sound, and the popularity of Mickey Mouse, studios seemed to be looking for fresh new characters. For the most part, the new stars, like Mickey, Bugs Bunny, and Tom & Jerry, moved from the movie screen to the world of comic strips and comic books. Animation producers did not forget their origins though. Comic characters such as Captain and the Kids, Li'l Abner and Nancy and Sluggo all became stars of animated series. Most did not prove as popular on movie screens. One notable exception of the time was Popeye. The scrappy comic strip sailor first appeared animated in 1933 and quickly became one of the biggest stars of animation. Creators generally drew from the popular mediums of film and radio for inspiration, frequently borrowing a voice or personality to place in an animated body.

By the late 1930s comic books had

become a highly popular source of entertainment among young people. Comic strips, however, were perceived as more of an adult medium since adults read newspapers. Therefore, at this time, they became more popular as a source for film which was also perceived as an adult medium. Comic book characters were relegated to children's programming like Saturday afternoon serials. The lone exception was a series of shorts based on the *Superman* comic produced in the early 1940s. Though technically excellent, the series did not spawn any additional action adventure entries.

Television and the Fifties meant a new, if less budgeted, market for animation. Most of the programming was aimed at children via re-runs of theatrical shorts. However, studios began to make headway into the new television market by producing original product that featured characters which appealed to children. Creators pulled from television and film persona for



...is now in production as an animated series from Saban.



The comic book property *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* became a phenomenal merchandising success when it was adapted into an animated series.

their cartoon stars. The popularity of original characters like Yogi Bear with college students indicated a more sophisticated audience, but with the exception of a flurry of prime time series in the early Sixties, most animation stayed in the playpen.

Bringing characters from print-comics to the screen (and vice versa) has never been a guarantee of success.

Action Hero Mania

In the mid-Sixties, animation went back to its origins for source material and for different audiences. Fred Silverman at ABC wanted to take over the Saturday morning market and looked around for what was popular with children. His answer was comic books, and ratings proved he was right. Before kids could say "Up, up and away!," Saturday morning was filled with Superman, Archie, Spider-Man, and a host of other popular comic characters. Japan's anime market made some of its first impressions on U.S. audiences with adaptations of popular Japanese manga such as *Astro Boy*, *Speed Racer* and *Kimba*.

CBS, looking for more adult audiences, went to comic strips. Beginning with the surprise success of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, executives once again found that people would enjoy seeing their favorite comic strips in anima-

tion. *Peanuts*, *Blondie*, *Garfield*, *Cathy*, *B.C.* and others became fodder for prime time specials. *Peanuts* eventually graduated into a line of successful feature films.

A decade later with the Seventies, anti-violence sentiment finally moved into children's programming. Faster than a speeding bullet, the super-hero comics disappeared from Saturday morning. Their time slots taken over by ghost hunters, adaptations of popular prime time series and races through time and space. The cycle was broken in the early Eighties when the European comic sensation *The Smurfs* hit Saturday morning. Suddenly, cozier, friendlier comics were sought. Comic books were represented by the likes of *Richie Rich*. Taking a page from their later viewers, programmers went to the papers and offered Saturday morning viewers *Garfield*, *Peanuts*, and *Mother Goose and Grimm*.



Osamu Tezuka's Japanese series *Astro Boy* was a hit in the U.S. in the 1960s.

A New Demand for Programming

The Eighties also brought new markets, like syndication, cable and home video to the table. These were not tied to network regulations and led the way back to action. The mega-hit *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, a very sugary version of the alternative comic hit, sent producers scrambling for other alternative titles. Another source was a variety of new anime, mostly based on popular manga, which became available in the U.S. thanks to

home video. Cable channels, like Fifties television, offered many new options, all with small budgets. Sadly the early Nineties saw several markets shrink as prime time animated specials all but disappeared and the major networks began to drop Saturday morning animation.

Comic strips are also still around, and still apparently being considered more adult than comic books.

As we soar past the mid-Nineties into the end of the decade, comic book and comic strip characters continue to evolve... both ways. *The Simpsons*, *Ren And Stimpy* and *Beavis & Butt-head* have successful comic book series. Fox has the rights to all of the Marvel Comic characters and Warner Bros. sits atop the DC super-hero warehouse. Alternative and international comics are finding productions here and there, while manga continues to be a key source for anime, which is becoming even more evident in video stores and on television. Comic strips are also still around, and still apparently being considered more adult than comic books. For instance, *Dilbert* is being done in live action which shows that the series is skewed for an older audience than a cartoon.

Comics, comic books and animation. A new mix? About as new as gravity... and sometimes as powerful a force with which to reckon.

John Cawley is currently a producer on Fox's Spider-Man series. Along with producing, he has also written and developed animated properties. As an author, he has a number of books and hundreds of articles to his credit.

Comic Strips and Animation: The Belgian Tradition

by Philippe Moins

Belgium possesses a rich and lively tradition in the field of comic strips. Some of the most popular comic heroes in Europe like *Tintin* (Hergé), *The Smurfs* (Peyo) and *Lucky Luke* (Morris), are the creations of Belgian cartoonists.

Immediately after World War II, Belgium developed a comic publishing industry, promoted by the creation of two major French-language comic magazines: the weekly *Tintin* published by Lombard beginning in 1946, and the weekly *Spirou* published by Dupuis since 1938. Originally intended for a Belgian audience, these publications subsequently won their core readership in France. In a great explosion of popularity, the successful authors at Lombard, Dupuis and Casterman (which did not publish a weekly magazine, but issued *Tintin* in book form) saw their work translated and published in a large number of other countries. Today, the printings of these authors have reached a considerable number. Hergé leads with several hundred million comic books despite the fact that the weeklies have run out of steam. In fact, *Tintin* magazine has disappeared altogether.

In this context, it was inevitable that the film industry would become interested in the success of these comic books. In the 1960s, two live-action features based on *The Adventures of Tintin* were produced in France. Obviously, however, animation, both for television and cin-

ema theaters, would claim the lions share of audiovisual adaptations of the Belgian comic strips.



The Flute of Six Smurfs. © Belvision.

The Belgian animation studios created for this purpose, played an important and often misunderstood role. In the absence of a true film industry able to sustain these projects, a rather familial and paternalistic side to these studios existed. This undoubtedly explains why their productions were tinged with a type of congenial amateurism that led them to reinvent things that had been discovered long ago.

Today, numerous comic book publishers depend on animated versions as a basic business to help maintain and develop the fame of their characters. As a sign of the times, they aim only at television and have enlarged their horizons to the point of practically renouncing the work of the local professionals, despite how good their reputation might be.

The Precursors

Let's go back for a few moments and establish that even during the 1940s, several attempts had already

been made to adapt comic strips to film.

Right after the Liberation, the first animation studio began at Liège. Thanks to the publisher Chagor, a very ambitious project saw the light of day. Chagor published a comic book called *Wrill*, named after an irreverent little fox created by Albert Fromenteau, and largely inspired by the French cartoonist Calvo. Both the comic book that published his adventures and the cartoon film series intended for theaters were called *Wrill*. The first episode, *Wrill Listens to the BBC*, clearly shows, in the spirit of the times, their satirical intentions; one thinks of the legendary 1943 Disney film *Der Führer's Face*. Of course, like most of the European cartoons of that period, the animation flowed and the roundness of the figures consistently gazed in the direction of the Disney productions.

However, *Wrill* did contain the seed that would lead to the glory of Belgian animation...

Albert Fromenteau's studio merits our attention, despite the fact that it did not fulfill its promise. Though the comic books lasted a little longer, a fire, a faulty distribution scheme, and of course the extremely limited local popularity of the character account for *Wrill's* demise in the cinema. However, *Wrill* did contain the seed that would lead



Tintin and the Temple of the Sun.
© Belvision.

to the glory of Belgian animation: the adaptation of characters from comic strips into animated cartoons.

Some other attempts can be cited around that same time in Brussels. Paul Nagant's CBA Studio is where Pierre Culliford (future creator of *The Smurfs*), Maurice De Bevere (*Lucky Luke*) and Eddy Paape (*Luke Orient*) took their first steps, before they joined the staff at *Spirou* magazine.

One exception to this two-dimensional picture is Claude Misonne, a puppeteer. Between 1946 and 1955, she produced several ambitious short films, sometimes mixing live-action with animated puppets. In 1948 she made a feature based on the adventures of Tintin called *The Crab with the Golden Claws*. This film rather shockingly changed the graphic universe of Hergé into a realm closer to that of George Pal or Jiri Trnka!

The Golden Age Of Animated Features

In 1955 Raymond Leblanc, head of Lombard publisher of the *Tintin* comic books, founded the Belvision animation studio, which brought Belgian animation out of its provinciality by offering the first television version of *The Adventures of Tintin*. This was followed by semi-animated versions of Goscinny and Uderzo's *Oumpah Pah*, Dino Attanasio's *Spaghetti*, Tibets *Chick Bill* and other heroes from the *Tintin* comic books.

In direct competition to Lombard, the Dupuis publishers established an animation studio called TVA Dupuis. TVA Dupuis essentially concentrated its efforts on television with, among other things, a black-and-white adaptation of *The Smurfs*, and several other films using the talents of Eddy Ryssack. However, Belvision would successfully attempt the transition to feature-length animated films for cinema theaters. They produced such films as *Pinocchio in Outer Space* (1964), *Asterix the Gaul* (1967), *Asterix and Cleopatra* (1968), *Tintin and the Temple of the Sun* (1969), *Daisy Town [Lucky Luke]* (1972), *Tintin and the Lake of Sharks* (1972), *Gulliver* (1975), and *The Flute of Six Smurfs* (1975). This demanding production schedule transformed Belvision into a veritable factory by European standards, in fact, it made some say at the time that Brussels had its own "Burbank." Indeed, Belvision was, along with London's Halas and Batchelor, one of the largest animation studios in Europe.

The Belgian animation studios created for this purpose, played an important and often misunderstood role.

Compared to other commercial productions of that period, the Belvision films were well-made, even though they suffered from an uncertain artistic direction. The delicate transformation from the universe of the comic book to that of cinema was not always made without a clash. While they were too literal and graphically hybrid, these adaptations nonetheless had merit. They preserve a certain charm and garnered remarkable success. Aside

from *Gulliver* (which mixes a live-action *Gulliver* played by Richard Harris with cartoon characters!) and *Pinocchio in Outer Space* (a strange sequel to Disney's *Pinocchio*, which is closer to Tezuka than Disney), all of these feature animations are adaptations of successful comic books.

If the first *Asterix the Gaul* was characterized by rather simple limited animation (it was originally planned for television), the studios following films display great care for the animation, with particular attention being paid to the elaboration of background details. As was typical, Hergé had a lack of interest in the two adaptations of *Tintin*. Therefore, he left the story and design of the films to Greg and his close collaborator Bob Demoor. Often the original cartoonists of the comic strips did not identify with the audiovisual counterparts. They regarded them as a simple means of augmenting the popularity of their comic books. Such an attitude obviously had incalculable consequences. At the beginning of the 1980s, Morris (*Lucky Luke*) and Peyo (*The Smurfs*) were both upset with their Belgian publisher Dupuis. They



Will Listens to the BBC.
© Docu Folioscope.



The Extraordinary Odyssey of Corentin
Feldoë. © Cuvelier-Lombard.

thought he lacked commercial aggressiveness in the international market so the creators allowed international businessmen to exploit their characters. Both creators had ended up with very limited control over the content of the adaptations. This explains why the comic book fans often scorn these derivative productions.

Only Goscinny, the French author of *Asterix*, and his collaborator, the cartoonist, Uderzo, really took a great interest in the filmic adaptations of their work - even to the point of breaking off with Belvision and creating their own Idéfix Studio in Paris with their French publisher Dargaud. The death of Goscinny ended Idéfix, but not a series of animated features produced in various European countries. Most recently, *Asterix in America*, was made in Germany in 1994 by Gerhard Hahn.

Mutations

As a consequence of such defections, by the end of the 1970s Belvision had to abandon its production of feature animation, and devote itself to making commercials and pilots for television series. Most recently they have produced, Cuvelier's *Corentin* and Goscinny and Tabary's *Iznogoud*. As for Lombard Publications, they were bought by Groupe Media Enterprises. Since Dupuis was purchased in 1985 by the Brussels Lambert company, the 1990s dawned with the two pinnacles of

Belgian publishing ceasing to be family businesses; the strong local roots with all the inherent good qualities and faults were gone.

Today, other studios have filled the niche for creating classic animated cartoons for the general public. They advertise themselves as independent services for hire to the publishing companies and as a sign of the times, they work primarily for television. Such is the case with Graphoui in the mid-1980s (*Quick and Flupke* from Hergé) and today with Kid Cartoon (*Carland Cross, Blake and Mortimer*) or Sofidoc (*Billy the Cat, The Cow*). Most of these series are being co-produced with other European studios. For example, the regrouping of Eva Studios, in which Sofidoc took part, assembled the Welsh Siriol, the German Cologne Cartoon, and the French studio La Fabrique. This type of collaboration has been encouraged by the Media Program of the European Common Market (Cartoon). Also note that while Kid Cartoons goes with assured quality by using E.P. Jacobs' *Blake and Mortimer*, Sofidoc makes adaptations of less classic comic-book authors such as Stéphane Colman and Jonathan Demoor.

Dupuis publishers, whom the TVA studios abandoned some time ago, have reestablished an audiovisual department to produce a large series based on their characters *Spiro and Fantasio* (since his creation this little groom has been drawn by five successive cartoonists, which is quite rare in Europe!). Marsu Productions, the holding company for the rights of Marsupilami, another Dupuis desert-er, signed with The Walt Disney Company. Here, we have an astonishing process. Franquin, after hav-

ing taken over drawing the *Spirou* comic books, evolved the comic universe to the point where he could add new characters such as Marsupilami. *Spirou* did not belong to Franquin, so when he ceded the rights to his Marsupilami they went to Marsu Productions. Hence, we now have the heroes of a successful comic strip both doing very well, concurrently for different publishers.

Indeed, Belvision was, along with London's Halas and Batchelor, one of the largest animation studios in Europe.

As for the estate of Hergé, all the rights he controlled were ceded to Ellipse and Nelvana Studios, who are producing a series based on *The Adventures of Tintin* for Canal+ television. There is little chance though that Captain Haddock would be sold to one company and Milou to another, since the Hergé Foundation carefully preserves the integrity of his work, sometimes to the point of jealousy, which, in Europe, gives rise to other kinds of controversy.

As you can see, an era is finished forever. Publishing houses like Lombard no longer have their own complete animation studio. One must say that they themselves have lost a part of their driving force in the market by becoming instruments of a more global strategy, led by those who will now forever hold the "portfolio of rights".

Picha, Precursor Of The Politically-Incorrect Cartoon

Picha came from newspaper cartooning, where he excelled and attained international fame. Since

1975 he has devoted himself to the production of animated features. The story of *The Shame of the Jungle* perfectly reflects the irreverence of this master of causticity. "Tarzoon", the hero of the film, bears an especially post-1960s "liberal" attitude that prevailed in 1975, but which created some legal problems with the heirs of Tarzan. In fact, Picha's Tarzoon is a dull fellow, exclusively preoccupied with sex. For the entire length of the film, he submits to the whims of our facetious gagan. The student audience delighted at this film and made it a hit much as they did Ralph Bakshi's animated feature based on the great cartoonist R. Crumb's *Fritz the Cat*. In the same vein, Picha created his next film, *Missing Link* (1980). Much more sophisticated on a technical level, this feature is without question the best of the three produced by Picha. Some say that he had lost a little of his verve by his third feature *The Big Bang* (1986). However, the times had changed, and the humor of Picha could have just appeared to be too "simplistic." With only these three films, Picha reached a considerable international audience, and they still remain remarkable examples of the satirical genre. Today Picha carries on with a series of televised originals, like *The Zoolympics* and *Bitch of Life* which are produced in collaboration with the independent production company Y.C. Alligator.

Aside from the fact that he is a cartoonist and not a comic strip author, Picha is different from his parallel Belgian comic strip artists in another way as well: from the moment that he began working on his animated features, he completely stopped publishing in newspapers; going from one medium to another without retracing any of his steps.

One should not speak of "adaptation" but rather of "reconversion." Picha became a true filmmaker, devoting all of his energy to his features, which perhaps explains the artistic success of the enterprise.

The revival of adult cartoons in the U.S. (like Klasky Csupo and Bill Plympton) might well validate Picha again in the genre in which he far excelled before anyone else.

Today, numerous comic book publishers depend on animated versions as a basic business to help maintain and develop the fame of their characters.

François Schuiten, The Outsider

François Schuiten (a cartoonist of well-known comic strips from which the series *Dark Cities* has been published in book form by Casterman, with story by Benoît Peeters) was always attracted to the cinema. Recently he collaborated with Suzanne Maes on the backgrounds for *Taxandria*, a feature by Raoul Servais. His series *The Quarxs* (Z.A. Productions), co-directed with Maurice Benayoun, is one of the too infrequent examples of computer graphics being easily worked into a story with finesse. This shows



Philippe Moins.

entomological catalogue of bizarre creatures, described in the jargon of the pseudo-scientific documentary, is without doubt the most original thing ever brought to the screen from the universe of a comic book cartoonist.

These two atypical examples, one achieving a certain public success, the other remaining less known, permits us to make an intelligent conclusion. Orphaned from their cartoonist parents, the audiovisual productions derived from comic strips in the last 20 years were created exclusively based on a commercial logic. In that context, they have successfully accomplished their goal, by pushing up the sales of comic books and the products derived from them. They have also paved a path for the next generation even as the Belgian tradition becomes a global one.

Translated from French by William Moritz.

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Philippe Moins created the Brussels Animation Festival in 1982, and currently co-directs it with Doris Cleven.

BD et Animation: Une Tradition Belge

par Philippe Moins

La Belgique possède une tradition riche et vivace dans le domaine de la bande dessinée. Quelques uns des héros européens les plus populaires du genre sont l'oeuvre de dessinateurs belges: *Tintin* (Hergé), *les Schtroumpfs* (Peyo), *Lucky Luke* (Morris)

Immédiatement après la deuxième guerre mondiale, la Belgique voit se développer une industrie éditoriale de la BD, favorisée par la création des deux principaux magazines de BD francophones (l'hebdomadaire *Tintin* aux éditions du Lombard, fondé en 1946 et l'hebdomadaire *Spirou* aux éditions Dupuis, créé dès 1938). Destinés au départ au public belge, ils conquièrent ensuite l'essentiel de leur lectorat en France. Dans la foulée, les auteurs à succès du Lombard, de Dupuis et de Casterman (ce dernier ne possède pas de magazine mais édite les albums de *Tintin*) se voient traduits et publiés dans un grand nombre d'autres langues. Le tirage des auteurs précités atteint aujourd'hui des chiffres considérables (Hergé figurant en tête avec plusieurs centaines de millions d'albums), même si les hebdomadaires se sont eux essouffés (au point que le journal *Tintin* a aujourd'hui disparu).

Dans ce contexte, ils était inévitable que le cinéma s'intéressât à ces succès. Dans les années soixante, deux films en prises de vues réelles furent produits en France à partir des aventures de *Tintin*. Mais c'est évidemment le dessin animé qui s'est taillé

la part du lion dans les adaptations audiovisuelles de la BD belge, tant à la télévision qu'au cinéma.



La Flûte à six schtroumpfs. © Belvision.

Les studios d'animation belges, créés pour la circonstance, ont joué un rôle important et souvent méconnu. L'absence d'une véritable industrie du cinéma, apte à soutenir ces projets, le côté quasi familial et paternaliste de certains de ces studios explique sans doute que leurs productions furent longtemps teintées d'une forme sympathique d'amateurisme, les incitant à réinventer ce qui avait été découvert bien avant eux.

Aujourd'hui, nombreux sont les éditeurs de BD qui comptent sur les versions audiovisuelles de leur fond de commerce pour maintenir et développer la notoriété de leurs personnages. Signe des temps, ils visent uniquement la télévision et ont élargi leurs horizons au point de renoncer pratiquement à faire travailler la profession locale, pourtant réputée...

Les précurseurs

Revenons quelques instants en arrière pour constater que déjà dans les années quarante, des tentatives

virent le jour qui visaient à adapter des bandes dessinées au cinéma.

La Libération voit la création d'un premier studio de dessin animés à Liège: préparé dans la clandestinité, un projet très ambitieux voit le jour grâce aux éditions Chagor. Celles-ci éditent un illustré baptisé *Wrill*, du nom d'un petit renard frondeur créé par Albert Fromenteau et largement inspiré par le dessinateur français Calvo. *Wrill* donne à la fois son nom au journal qui publie ses aventures et à une série de dessins animés destinés aux salles. Le premier épisode, *Wrill écoute la BBC* témoigne d'une volonté originale de satire, bien dans l'esprit du temps (que l'on songe au mytique *Der Führer's Face*, réalisé en 1943 par les studios Walt Disney). Bien sûr, comme pour la plupart des cartoonistes européens à l'époque, l'animation coulée et la rondeur des figures lorgnent avec insistance du côté des productions Disney.

***Wrill* contenait en germe ce qui allait faire la gloire du dessin animé en Belgique**

Le studio d'Albert Fromenteau mérite notre attention: même s'il ne tint pas ses promesses (un incendie, une structure de distribution défailante et bien sûr la notoriété très locale du personnage eurent raison de *Wrill* au cinéma, la revue continuant à paraître quelque temps encore), il contenait en germe ce qui allait faire la gloire du dessin animé en Belgique: l'adaptation animée de



Tintin et le temple du soleil. © Belvision.

personnages de bandes dessinées.

D'autres tentatives sont à signaler a peu près au même moment à Bruxelles (le studio CBA de Paul Nagant, où Pierre Culliford (futur créateur des *Schtroumpfs*), Maurice De Bevere (*Lucky Luke*) et Eddy Paape (*Luc Orient*) firent leurs premiers pas, avant de rejoindre l'équipe du journal Spirou.

Les studios d'animation belges, créés pour la circonstance, ont joué un rôle important et souvent méconnu.

Exception dans ce tableau bi-dimensionnel, Claude Misonne, créatrice de poupées, réalise de 1946 à 1955 un certain nombre de courts métrages ambitieux, mêlant parfois prise de vues réelles et animation de marionnettes. Un long métrage inspiré par les aventures de Tintin voit ainsi le jour, qui combine ces techniques: *le Crabe aux pinces d'Or*. Le résultat surprend, métamorphosant l'univers graphique d'Hergé dans un univers plus proche de Pal ou Trnka!

L'âge d'Or des longs métrages

C'est en 1955, lorsque Raymond Leblanc, patron des éditions du Lombard, éditeur du journal Tintin, fonde le studio d'animation Belvision, que le dessin animé belge sort véritablement de la confidentialité en offrant une première version des aventures de Tintin, destinées à la

télévision. Elle sera suivie de versions semi animées d' *Oumpah Pah* (d'après Goscinny et Uderzo), *Spaghetti* (d'après Dino Attanasio), *Chick Bill* (d'après Tibet) et d'autres héros du journal Tintin.

Concurrents directs des éditions du Lombard, les éditions Dupuis, créent un studio baptisé TVA Dupuis. Si TVA Dupuis concentre l'essentiel de ses efforts vers la télévision (avec entre autres une adaptation des *Schtroumpfs* en noir et blanc et quelques films dus au talent d'Eddy Ryssack), Belvision va tenter avec succès le passage aux longs métrages destinés aux salles. Vont ainsi se succéder *Pinocchio dans l'espace* (1964), *Astérix le Gaulois* (1967), *Astérix et Cléopâtre* (1968), *Tintin et le Temple du soleil* (1969), *Daisy Town* (Lucky Luke) (1972), *Tintin et le lac aux requins* (1972), *Gulliver* (1975), *La Flûte à six Schtroumpfs* (1975). Le rythme parfois effréné des productions transforme Belvision en véritable usine de dimension européenne, ce qui fera dire à certains à l'époque que Bruxelles avait son "Burbank". De fait, avec Halas et Batchelor à Londres, Belvision fut durant une décennie l'un des plus grands studios d'animation en Europe.

De bonne facture si on les compare à d'autres productions commerciales de l'époque, les films de Belvision ont souffert d'une direction artistique incertaine. Le délicat passage de l'univers des albums à celui du cinéma ne s'est pas fait sans heurts: à la fois trop littérales et graphiquement hybrides, ces adaptations avaient pourtant le mérite d'exister, d'autant qu'elles conservent un certain charme et recueillirent des succès remarquables. Mis à part *Gulliver* (un mélange de prises de vues réelles mêlant un Gulliver joué par Richard

Harris et des personnages de cartoons!) et *Pinocchio dans l'espace* (une étrange suite au Pinocchio de Disney, plus proche de Tezuka que de Disney), tous ces longs métrages sont des adaptations d'albums de BD à succès.

Si le premier, *Astérix le gaulois* se signalait par des animations très sommaires (il avait été conçu au départ pour la télévision), les films suivants dénotent un plus grand souci dans l'animation et un soin tout particulier dans l'élaboration des décors. La manque d'intérêt d'Hergé pour les deux adaptations de Tintin, laissant les coudées franches au dessinateur-scénariste Greg et à son proche collaborateur Bob Demoor, est symptomatique: souvent, les dessinateurs de BD ne s'identifièrent pas à ces projets audiovisuels et n'y virent que de simples moyens d'augmenter la popularité de leurs albums. Une telle attitude eut évidemment des conséquences incalculables. C'est ainsi qu'au début des années 80, Morris (*Lucky Luke*) et Peyo (*les Schtroumpfs*), tous deux en conflit avec leur éditeur belge Dupuis (lui reprochant son manque d'agressivité commerciale sur le plan internation-



Wrill écoute la BBC. © Docu Folioscope.



Etude pour le film *L'extraordinaire Odyssée de Corentin Feldoë*. © Cuvelier-Lombard.

al), permirent à des opérateurs internationaux d'exploiter leurs personnages en opérant un contrôle finalement assez limité sur le contenu des adaptations. Ce qui explique le peu d'estime des amateurs de BD belges pour ces produits dérivés.

Seul Goscinny, scénariste français d'Astérix et son compère le dessinateur Uderzo s'intéressèrent vraiment à ces adaptations cinématographiques... au point de renoncer aux services de Belvision pour créer à Paris leur propre studios Idéfix, avec l'éditeur français Dargaud. Le décès de Goscinny mit un terme à Idéfix mais pas à une suite de longs métrages réalisés dans divers pays d'Europe (le dernier à ce jour: *Asterix in America*, réalisé en Allemagne en 94 par Gerhard Hahn).

Mutations.

Conséquence de ces défections, à la fin des années soixante-dix, Belvision va abandonner la réalisation de longs métrages pour se consacrer à la réalisation de spots publicitaires ou de films "pilotes" pour des séries télévisées (derniers en date: *Corentin d'après Cuvelier*, *Iznogoud d'après Goscinny et Tabary*). Quant aux Éditions du Lombard, elles sont rachetées par la Groupe Media participations. Ce qui signifie qu'à l'aube des années 90, deux fleurons de l'édition belge* cessent d'être des maisons familiales, à forte implantation locale, avec les qualités et les défauts inhérents à la chose.

Aujourd'hui, d'autres studios ont pris la relève, se profilant comme prestataires de services indépendants des maisons d'édition, dans le créneau du dessin animé classique de large consommation. Signe des temps, ils oeuvrent avant tout pour la télévision. C'est le cas de Graphoui au milieu des années quatre-vingt (*Quick et Flupke* d'après Hergé) et aujourd'hui de Kid Cartoon (*Carland Cross*, *Blake et Mortimer*) ou de Sofidoc (*Billy the Cat*, *la Vache*), ces séries étant co-réalisées avec d'autres studios européens**. Notons que si Kid Cartoons se réfère à des valeurs sûres en reprenant Blake et Mortimer de E.P. Jacobs, en ce qui concerne Sofidoc il s'agit d'adaptations d'auteurs de BD moins consacrés (Stéphane Colman et Johan Demoor)

Les éditions Dupuis, dont les studios TVA avaient fermé leurs portes depuis belle lurette, ont relancé un département audiovisuel en produisant une grosse série basée sur leurs personnages maison, Spirou et Fantasio. (pour mémoire, le petit groom a été dessiné depuis sa création par 5 dessinateurs successifs, ce qui est un fait assez rare en Europe).

Marsu productions, la société détentrice des droits du Marsupilami (encore un transfuge de chez Dupuis) a elle signé avec The Walt Disney Company. On assiste ainsi à un étonnant processus. Franquin, après avoir repris le dessin de la BD Spirou, fit évoluer l'univers au point d'y adjoindre de nouveaux personnages comme le Marsupilami. Spirou n'appartenant pas à Franquin et celui-ci ayant par ailleurs cédé les droits de son Marsupilami à Marsu Productions, voici les héros d'une BD à succès qui volent de leurs propres ailes, chacun de son côté, pour des maisons concurrentes.

Quant à l'héritage de Hergé, ses ayant droits ont confié le soin de réaliser une série basée sur les aventures de Tintin aux studios Ellipse et Nelvana, pour Canal+. Il y a très peu de chance que le capitaine Haddock soit vendu à une société et Milou à une autre, la fondation Hergé veillant à préserver l'intégrité de l'oeuvre, parfois jalousement, ce qui suscite en Europe un autre type de polémiques...

De fait, avec Halas et Batchelor à Londres, Belvision fut durant une décennie l'un des plus grands studios d'animation en Europe.

Comme on le voit, une époque est à jamais révolue, celle des maisons d'édition qui à l'instar des éditions du Lombard, se dotaient d'un studio d'animation intégré. Il faut dire qu'elles mêmes perdent une part de leur rôle moteur en devenant les instruments d'une stratégie plus globale, menée par ceux qui désormais détiennent des "portefeuilles de droits".

Picha, précurseur du cartoon politiquement incorrect

Issu du dessin de presse où il excella et atteint rapidement une renommée internationale, le dessinateur Picha se lança dès 1975 dans la réalisation d'un long métrage en dessin animé. L'argument de *La Honte de la Jungle* reflète parfaitement l'irrévérence propre à ce Maître ès causticité: *Tarzoön*, le héros du film entretient avec son modèle une relation très critique, bien dans le ton post soixante-huitard qui prévalait en 1975, ce qui lui valut quelques problèmes juridiques avec les héritiers de Tarzan. En fait, le *Tarzoön* de Picha est un personnage falot, exclusivement préoccupé de sexe; il subit tout

au long du film les caprices de notre "gagman" facétieux, en général pour le plus grand plaisir d'un public estudiantin qui fit un triomphe à la même époque à *Fritz the Cat*, le premier long métrage de Ralph Bakshi inspiré par les dessins de cet autre grand cartooniste, Robert Crumb. La même veine sera ensuite exploitée par Picha dans *le Chaînon manquant* (1980). Beaucoup plus sophistiqué sur le plan technique, ce long métrage est sans doute le meilleur des trois réalisés par Picha. D'aucuns considèrent qu'il aurait perdu un peu de sa verve dans un troisième long métrage, *le Big Bang* (1986). De fait, les temps ont changé, et l'humour de Picha peut apparaître trop "premier degré". Il n'en reste pas moins que ces trois films ont totalisé une audience internationale non négligeable et qu'ils constituent trois exemples remarquables d'un genre satirique salvateur. Aujourd'hui, Picha prolonge cette veine dans des séries télévisées originales (*Les Zoolympics*, *Chienne de vie*), réalisées avec la complicité de la maison de production indépendante Y.C. Aligator.

Outre qu'il est cartooniste et non auteur de "comics strips", Picha cultive par rapport à ses homologues de la BD belge une autre différence, de taille: Dès le moment où il a entrepris ses longs métrages, il a cessé de publier dans la presse, passant d'un médium à l'autre sans pratiquement revenir sur ses pas. On ne peut pas parler d'adaptation mais de "reconversion", Picha devenant réalisateur de ses films et leur consacrant toute son énergie, ce qui explique dans une large mesure la réussite artistique de l'entreprise.

Le renouveau du cartoon adulte aux Etats-Unis (entre autres avec Klasky Csupo, Bill Plympton, etc...) pourrait bien le remettre à l'honneur, dans

ce genre où il a excellé avant tout le monde.

Aujourd'hui, nombreux sont les éditeurs de BD qui comptent sur les versions audiovisuelles de leur fond de commerce pour maintenir et développer la notoriété de leurs personnages.

François Schuiten, l'"outsider"

François Schuiten, dessinateur de BD bien connu, dont la série des *Cités Obscures* (scénario de Benoît Peeters) est éditée par Casterman, a toujours été attiré par le cinéma. Récemment, on lui doit avec Suzanne Maes les décors du *Taxandria*, le long métrage de Raoul Servais.

Sa série *les Quarxs* (Z.A. Production), co-réalisée avec Maurice Benayoun, est un des trop rares exemples d'images de synthèse scénarisées avec bonheur. Cette sorte de catalogue entomologique de créatures bizarres, décrites dans un jargon documentaire pseudo scientifique est sans doute la chose la plus originale jamais portée à l'écran à partir de l'univers d'un dessinateur de BD.



Philippe Moins.

Ces deux exemples atypiques, l'un promu à un certain succès public, l'autre resté confidentiel, nous permettent de nuancer une conclusion désabusée: orphelines de leurs pères dessinateurs, les productions audiovisuelles liées à la BD relèvent depuis vingt ans d'une logique exclusivement commerciale. A ce titre, elles atteignent pleinement leur objectif, en dopant la vente des albums et des produits dérivés.

* Les éditions Dupuis ont elles été rachetées en 1985 par le groupe Bruxelles Lambert.

** Exemple: le regroupement de studios Eva, dont fait partie Sofidoc, rassemble les gallois de Siriol, les allemands de Cologne Cartoon et le studio français la Fabrique. Ce type de regroupement a été encouragé par le Programme Media de l'Union européenne (Cartoon).

Philippe Moins a créé le festival de Bruxelles en 1982 et le co-dirige actuellement avec Doris Cleven.

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Virtually Melting Down: The Quest to Produce an Animated Independent Feature

by Randy Lofficier

Editor's Note: President of Perfect World Entertainment, Randy Lofficier, has recently embarked upon the ambitious undertaking of producing an independent animated feature film *Virtual Meltdown*. The film follows star cruiser pilot Morgan and her holographic navigator, Cobalt-60, as they carry 4,000 emigrating humans through hyperspace to the new colony of Alpha Centauri. Endangering the trip are a mysterious being known only as K, and the Sheol, evil entities who attempt to keep Morgan in "fugue" — a disruptive state of mind that overcomes hyperspace travelers — thereby threatening the lives of all aboard. Scripted by science fiction writers Emma Bull & Will Shetterly (*War for the Oaks*, *Bone Dance*, *Finder*, *Elsewhere*, and *Never Never*), *Virtual Meltdown* draws from several previously known, yet unrelated comic book properties, including *Cobalt-60* created by Vaughn and Mark Bode (*Wizards*), *The Silent Invasion* created by Michael Cherkas & Larry Hancock, *Approaching Centauri* by Moebius & Philippe Druillet (*Heavy Metal*) and *Oxyjean*, an unpublished story by Kevin O'Neill (*Judge Dredd*, *Marshal Law*). What is exciting about this project is that the visuals will change while the characters and story continue on. Therefore, the film's story will be told through four or five different comic book

styles depending on what is happening. How is Perfect World trying to get this unique project flying? Randy is here to explain!

I've always found animation to be a frustrating field. For the mainstream of the population, it has always been seen as mostly stuff for children. Even the big, Disney extravaganzas have always been aimed at a relatively young audience, with any enjoyment by adults coming as a bit of a side issue. Certainly, over recent years Japanese anime has become more popular with slightly older audiences, but it is still perceived as being a somewhat specialized item. In Hollywood, it has always been easier to sell a product that is not so new that people haven't seen it

before, and not so different that it would stand out too brightly in a crowd. Besides, no studio executive has ever been fired for saying no to a project. Therefore, selling an animated feature that didn't fit into a neatly preconceived box seemed to be a long shot.

I've always found animation to be a frustrating field.

Starting The Deal

It was with the above baggage that I set out to produce my first film project, *Virtual Meltdown*. In late 1995 Tak Abe of Kurosawa Enterprises USA, Inc. contacted me. We had tried to launch an animated project before, but the timing had not been right. This time, Tak wanted to introduce me to Taro Maki of Pioneer LDC, Inc., the animation wing of Pioneer Electronics. Taro wanted to see Japanese animation reach a wider audience in the U.S. market, and believed that the best way to achieve this was with an American co-producing partner.

As it happened, at precisely the same time, I had begun developing an adult animation project for a group of independent investors. When I told Tak and Taro about the film I wanted to make, *Virtual Meltdown*, they both liked the idea and we all agreed that we should work together to make this our co-production. The idea behind our



Morgan, a star cruiser pilot, is *Virtual Meltdown's* protagonist.



"K," the villain in *Virtual Meltdown*, chases the heroine Morgan, in a battle to control hyperspace.

collaboration was to make it a true creative partnership. We felt that if we could make this production work it would be because each partner brought something to the relationship that would make the end result stronger. We all believed that by marrying western art style with an American script and Japanese animation techniques, we could create a hybrid with a unique flavor and appeal that was different from anything either country had so far produced. Neither partner would be subservient to the other; neither was subcontracting. We were all to be equally important to the creative process.

Our plan was to keep our budget in the \$10 million range.

One of the other givens that we were trying to achieve was a decent budget. The U.S. feature animation output has become almost exclusively very expensive, mostly musical extravaganzas. For a company without the deep pockets of a Disney, DreamWorks or Warners, it would be impossible to compete at this level. Our plan was to keep our budget in the \$10 million range. We knew that we needed to approach the process of making this film in the same way an independent live-action feature producer would. We did have one advantage

over many independent projects. Pioneer LDC, Inc. believed in *Virtual Meltdown* strongly enough to invest a comfortable sum in the film's development. In light of this, we were able to option the four comic book properties that we wanted as the feature's artistic foundation. We were also able to finance

the writing of a script and a fair amount of development art to bring the comic book characters into a more animatable style.

The final element necessary to enable us to sell the project was to begin the casting process.

The Artistic Elements

Although we plan to use four, possibly five, distinct art styles, we never wanted to make *Virtual Meltdown* an anthology. That has been done before, and is usually not very successful from either a business or creative point of view. We came up with a story that carries the three main characters through an entire arc; even if they look slightly different depending on which visual universe they happen to be in.

To make sure that there was a strong emotional hook for the audience, we decided to choose writers who had shown their ability to create characters with which an audience could identify. I was impressed by the work of Emma Bull and Will Shetterly, two well-regarded science fiction and fantasy novelists. Although they write their books separately, they had written several screenplays together and understood the kind of film we wanted to make. We were able to work together to solve the prob-

lems inherent in taking four vastly different properties and linking them into a single, coherent story. By ingeniously combining these characters and concepts, Emma and Will have explored established worlds known to comic and science fiction readers and have connected them in ways that not only re-map the elements, but create a whole new atlas. The effect is rather like being introduced for the first time to friends and places that you already know and love.

The final element necessary to enable us to sell the project was to begin the casting process. We wanted to find actors who wouldn't necessarily be the obvious choice, but who would bring a unique flavor to an already slightly different kind of project. So far, we have been lucky enough to get our first choice for the role of the villainous "K": noted horror and fantasy writer/director Clive Barker. Clive does a terrific job reading his books on tape and doing live readings at various conventions, and, since his name is synonymous with evil, we think he'll be a great villain.

Will all of these elements come together in a cohesive fashion to enable us to find the rest of the financing we need? In the end, will the film be successful? While I can only hope that the answer to both questions is yes, I do know that getting this far, has certainly been an interesting and enlightening experience.

Randy Lofficier is President of Perfect World Entertainment, LLC, an animation production and development company dedicated to the principle of "No Singing Mice." She has worked as a writer in animation and comic books for fifteen years, and is also a partner in Starwatcher Graphics.

Developing the Next Animated Blockbuster: It Isn't An Easy Process

Developing an animated series or feature from a comic book might seem easy from the standpoint that the comic book would give a development team a solid starting point. However, developing a comic book into an animated property has its own set of special problems. We asked a select group of development executives, "What were/are the most challenging aspects of transferring a property from comic book form to an animated one?" While story plays an important role, it seems the actual shift in medium remains to be the most problematic aspect of the process.

"This music is nice? Who did it?" "Vivaldi." "Can we get him?" - Gerard Baldwin

Robert Réa, Ellipse Programme
Robert Réa has been the executive producer for the adaptations of such comics and books as *Babar*, *Blake and Mortimer*, *The Adventures of Tintin*, *Fennec*, and currently *Corto Maltese*. Here he supplies us with his Top Ten Pitfalls!

"1. The false "good ideas." Some comic books are not adaptable because one really needs to read them. To transfer such a property into an animated cartoon would be an artistic flop.

2. Some comic books have a non-transferable graphic style which would be completely transformed in the event of an adaptation. At this point we have to ask ourselves, "Which one will we choose and why?"

3. Some comics' authors neglect to write a true story that is really structured. In this case, the transfer to animated cartoon can only be envisioned in an artistic short-length picture.

4. When we decide to adapt a comic which appears, to us, adaptable, we must accept that some supporters will never forgive us.

5. How can one recreate the atmosphere of a comic book? Television and cinema are linear concepts. There is no way to turn pages, and read backwards or forwards.

6. For that reason, sometimes it is impossible to follow the comic book as it is. The most important thing to keep in mind is the "soul" of it.

7. In the case of a famous comic book, which had been edited for a long time, the graphic style was not homogeneous. We had to keep the most representative style.

8. The artistic control by the origi-

nal authors, their heirs or representatives can turn into a nightmare, but sometimes it can be helpful.

9. Creating new characters, backgrounds or stories in an adaptive concept requires particular care.

10. One has to read and reread a comic book many times before adapting it and then one must continue to read it again and again through all of the adaptive process."

The most important thing to keep in mind is the "soul" of it. - Robert Réa, Ellipse Programme

Gerard Baldwin

Gerard began his apprenticeship in animation at UPA studios working on Mr. Magoo. He left for two years in order to serve in the Korean War and was assigned to the National Security Agency. He returned to his apprenticeship and began a rapid rise in the world of animation. Besides directing *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, *George of the Jungle*, *The Flintstones*, *Yogi Bear*, *Dr. Seuss*, and *The Smurfs*, he also wrote and created commercials and industrial and educational films. He also produced Emmy Award-winning shows and is the recipient of numerous other awards.

"*The Smurfs* easily translated into

animation. They were simple to draw. They were clearly defined. Their world was beautiful. Peyo was protective of his creation and rightly so. Television is a gigantic consumer and we used up Peyo's life's work in the first few episodes. Problems came from everywhere.... "If you put classical music in this show I'll brake your arm!"

"We really need another girl!"

"How about adding a dog? Everybody loves dogs."

"This music is nice...Who did it?"

"Vivaldi." "Can we get him?"

"Isn't there a way we can get a black Smurf in there?"

"Careful, Gerard, some of the religious right are saying the Smurfs are satanic!"

After five years, I quit *The Smurfs*. Maybe smurfed out, maybe not. So, finally, the powers got their dog - and a grandpa - and another girl - and a baby - and a lot more sugar. That Peyo allowed any of this is appalling. Money won."

It's a constant challenge to maintain the integrity of the original material. - Laura Harkcom and Tim Hauser

Laura Harkcom and Tim Hauser, Warner Bros. Feature Animation

Warner Bros. Feature Animation Creative Executive Laura Harkcom and Warner Bros. Feature Animation Producer Tim Hauser are currently in story development on animated feature interpretations of classic DC Comics properties. Laura formerly worked in development at Walt Disney Movietoons, where she contributed to the development of *A Goofy Movie*, and the upcoming animated feature *Tarzan*. Laura is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University. Tim is a former staff writer

and creative executive with Walt Disney Feature Animation, where he contributed to the development of many projects, including *Beauty And The Beast*. He also conceived the original story for the Oscar-nominated Mickey Mouse short *Runaway Brain*.. Tim graduated from the California Institute of the Arts and has also been a production artist on various animated films like, *Brave Little Toaster*. He also served as Sequence Director and Animation Supervisor on the Fox feature *Ferngully: The Last Rainforest*.

"The superhero genre is a pop form of modern mythology. Like all folk and fairy tales, a successful film interpretation requires a determined suspension of disbelief and an earnest, unquestioning acceptance of impossible happenings. The older DC Comics characters have classic, thematic hooks that make this fantasy acceptable and relevant to the viewer.

The most difficult aspect of getting solid interpretations to the screen is the wild success of previous film and television interpretations. These properties have left indelible preconceptions on people who are less familiar with the root material and its rich subtext. Even with many crew members, there is an automatic assumption of *Batman* (be it "camp" or "dark") or *Super Friends* ("stiff" or "shallow") that is a constant reference battle at every stage of conception. Due to the collaborative nature of the filmmaking process, these stereotypes tend to creep back in at various stages from story to art conception, even if there is a tangible new vision present. To me (Tim Hauser), this is much of the reason for the "sameness" between many comics-based films. It's a constant challenge to maintain the integrity of the original material."

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Getting That Big Call And Entering Development!

Scores of people on any given day are waiting for that call, that go-ahead, that "Yes, we want to put your property into development!" But what happens next? How many don't end up on television or in theaters? How many do but take years to happen? How many still have creators involved that are happy they got the call in the first place? We asked some of the leading comic creators and agents who are working toward developing their books into animated shows, *"What was your experience when your comic book was made into or was going to be made into an animated product? What do you wish you had known beforehand?"*

Steve Rude

Steve Rude created *Nexus* with writer Mike Baron in 1981. Initially published by Capital City, it became one of the first color titles from First Comics in 1985. Steve has worked for DC on such projects as *Space Ghost*, *Mister Miracle* and has recently done the art and covers for three issues of the *World's Finest* series. Dark Horse is now publishing *Nexus* and Steve has been working on converting the property into an animated series for several years.



Steve Rude.

"My first direct hit with *Nexus* as an animated show came in August 1993, when I met Fred Seibert from Hanna-Barbera. Fred was the new President of the same company that founded many of my favorite cartoon shows, and so having *Nexus* there seemed appropriate. Introduced through a mutual friend at the San Diego Comic Con, Fred and I hit it off right away. Later, I would introduce Fred to the work that friends and I had thus far put into making *Nexus* an on screen reality.

The deal at Hanna-Barbera took forever to make, and I got my first real dose of the legal end of deal making, and the glacial pace at which lawyers work. Eight months later we reached a deal. No one had ever been able to properly explain to me why this legal process must take so long. It

was an exercise in boredom and frustration.

Working with Joy Every, the Vice-President of Hanna-Barbera's feature animation development department, we were able to secure the talents of Eric Luke, a seasoned script writer and fellow *Nexus* fan. The story outline he turned out for *Nexus* was fantastic. But, with recent changes in corporate personnel, we were subjected to an endless period of inactivity, and soon found ourselves back to where we started. It was, however, in Joy's contract that she be permitted to take *Nexus* elsewhere. So, for the next year, she, I, and Eric tried to interest other studios in *Nexus*. After countless pitch meetings at places big and small, we were turned down by each and every one of them.

Bottom line — Trust your instincts and develop the courage to see them through.
- Steve Rude

Joy eventually moved on to greener pastures, and I, one Steve Rude, found himself sitting back at the all-too-familiar square one. Undaunted, however, and knowing, *absolutely knowing*, that someone would eventually soon see the light, I made contact with

Joe Pearson at Epoch where it is presently awaiting sale. Joe was my second choice after Rough Draft, the company responsible for the brilliant *Maxx* series for MTV, turned it down.

Along the way, I picked up a new agent, Jean-Marc Lofficier, and couldn't be happier. The man listens and understands. He also promptly returns my phone calls. Three things to look for in a lawyer.

Bottom line — Trust your instincts and develop the courage to see them through. If a deal smells bad, don't do it. If you follow through with people you don't trust, get ready for your worst nightmare.

Finally, remember that the entertainment industry's greatest triumphs were routinely turned down by dozens of studios before breaking through. Don't give up!"

**The best advice I ever received
was to get a good lawyer.
- Tom Mason**

Tom Mason, MainBrain Productions

Tom Mason is a partner in MainBrain Productions, the Malibu, California-based entertainment development company whose clients include Universal Studios, Klasky Csupo, Gunther-Wahl, Morgan Creek, and Dreamworks SKG. He once took an unforgettable holiday in "Development Hell" with a comic book he created called "Dinosaurs For Hire."

"Let's say 'the call' finally came and now somebody wants to take your comic book — your precious jewel, your baby — and

turn it into the next big Saturday morning blockbuster, assuming they still show cartoons on Saturday morning by the time you finish production. 'Oh boy!' is one of the more printable exclamations you'll yell after you hang up the phone.

The next step is the negotiation. When you're sitting in the conference room filled with people in tailored suits whose beautiful assistants are offering you chilled Evian and platefuls of spiced ham, and you're shaking hands with people whose names you've seen on your television screen, it's easy to forget why you're there. These are such nice people. They like me. They want to work with me.

Uh, sure. Whatever. So, shake their hands, eat their food, and date their assistants, but always remember: it's your job to get as much money as you can and still retain some semblance of creative control. After all, you did create the project. As distasteful as it might seem, recognize that you might not be the smartest person in the room and that only you have your best interest at heart. Once you've made that leap, you have to build a team of people who are on your side.

The best advice I ever received was to get a good lawyer. I liked mine so much, I got a second one with a different area of expertise. They play well together, look out for my interests, and define "legalese" in terms that my "low SAT-score brain" can understand. With their help, I'm able to do what I do best: create, write, shake hands and eat free food."

Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier
Founded in 1985, The



A model sheet for Nexus.

Starwatcher Agency was created by French artist Jean "Moebius" Giraud, Claudine Giraud, Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier. Its purposes are to assist comic-book creators in the selling and negotiating of the rights to their comic-book properties in the fields of motion pictures, television, animation and merchandising. It is also to help comic book artists find employment in the fields of concept design and storyboards.

"In 1987 we began working on developing Moebius' *Airtight Garage* as an animated feature. It turned into a real globe-hopping adventure. Our first attempt was to work with Les Productions Pascal Blais in Montreal. Pascal was a true Moebius fan, and loved the project as much as we did. Unfortunately we were not able to find the financing we needed and had to shelve *The Garage*.

In September of 1989 we were contacted by Renat Zinnurov who was working with the then Soviet animation studio Soyuzmultfilm. This was right in the middle of the Glasnost period, and the Soviets were looking to get involved in animation projects that would bring western currency into the country. The beauty of our



Li'l Dinos for Hire, a comic book created by Tom Mason and published by Malibu Comics.

arrangement was that the project would be entirely financed in rubles, and we wouldn't have to look for outside funding.

In November we traveled to Moscow for a week's worth of meetings on the project. It was an incredible experience, although a real eye-opener about how cultural differences can play a true role in story development and co-production.

Soyuzmultfilm is an extremely talented studio, but at the time their facilities were sadly out of date. Another, and bigger, problem had to do with the graphic language of our two cultures. Although they liked the art on the comic book page, they seemed unable to truly integrate what they saw into their own drawing. We were treated extremely kindly and well by all the people at the studio, but I believe also, that because of the political context of the times, there was a real problem in accepting American and French creative control of the project.

Ultimately, there was just no way for us to get them to understand what we were trying to do, and the relationship dissolved.

We then met with an Irish studio which is now defunct. At the same time we were contacted by an investor from Florida who said he was able to put together independent financing for *The Garage*. This turned into the strangest of the experiences, as after many meetings the mysterious Florida investor turned to smoke. We never understood what he had hoped to gain by stringing us along. He certainly didn't get any money out of us. Unfortunately, what he did get were two of the very limited (20) leather bound storyboards that we had made as sales tools.

We had one final attempt to carry on the project with an independent producer who worked very hard for three or four years to pull *The Garage* together. At one time Akira Kurosawa was to be the executive producer, Katsuhiro Otomo was set to co-direct with Moebius and U2 and Brian Eno had agreed to provide the music. But we were never able to convince an American distributor of the value of the property. Perhaps the time was never right, or perhaps the project appeared too sophisticated. At any rate, we decided to take it off the market for the time being and wait until the climate is better for a film of this type.

Because this is a relatively complicated graphic novel, we had a fair number of choices to make when it came to writing the script. We wanted to keep the richness and flavor of the original, yet make the film accessible to general audiences. We therefore made some choices that

could probably be the subject of hours of discussion. For some tastes, we probably kept too many characters from the original, but we all felt that they were essential to keep *The Garage*, *The Garage*.

If you follow through with people you don't trust, get ready for your worst nightmare.

- Steve Rude

Because of the complicated nature of the material, we also felt that having a script and graphic novel were not enough as sales tools. We discovered that most studio people only read the dialog in a script, which is totally inadequate when a fair portion of your story depends on the visual elements contained in it. We decided to commission a "sales" storyboard so that potential buyers would be able to more clearly understand the story we were trying to tell.

Although this was an expensive decision for a small company like ours, it proved to be wise investment. I believe we would never have gotten as far as we did with the project if we hadn't done it."

Getting Published: A Few Suggested Paths

So how does one go about getting a comic book published? This is the exact question we asked the following folks. Whether you choose to go the distance with a large established company like Dark Horse or delve into the world of self-publishing, a few things remain certain. Getting a comic book off the ground requires not only amazing talent, skill, and knowledge of the marketplace but also determination and an ego of steel.



Steve Peters.

Steve Peters

Steve Peters' work has appeared in Dave Sims' *Cerebus* (#146), Rick Veitch's *Rare Bit Fiends* (#13 and #20) as well as Patricia Breens' *Kiss and Tell* (#3). Since 1994, he has taught a class at the North Penn Arts Alliance. He and his partner David Nowell published their own mini-comics from 1992-1996. Steve has a book coming out from Amaze Ink/Slave Labor Graphics called *Everwinds* which will begin its run in August 1997. Steve has also won a Xeric Award for his book *Awakening Comics* which he began self-publishing in June of 1997. *Awakening Comics* can be ordered by contacting Steve directly at Ganesh9@aol.com.

"Well, I think the most important thing you'll need is determination and an unwillingness to ever give up. You may suffer some bruises to your ego along

the way, but if you've known all your life that this is what you want to do, and you believe in yourself, and you're willing to keep trying until you make it, then I think your chances are good.

The first step is to look at the companies that publish comic books and find those that are most suited to whatever project you're working on or whatever style you have. Write to those companies and ask for their submission guidelines. Some companies are very specific about the kind of submissions they'll look at.

Your submission should consist of several pages of your work (the number a publisher will want to look at will vary), preferably all from the same sequence or story. One of the most important skills you need as a comic book creator is the ability to tell a story, and a publisher will be able to tell right away if you're any good at it.

When your submission is ready, write a cover letter with a brief description of the work you are proposing. Tell the publisher what kind of format you are thinking of (mini-series, monthly series, whatever), and give any other information pertinent to the project you have in mind. Do not forget to include a S.A.S.E.

Don't badger or pester the publisher to find out how your submission is doing. If you're really anxious, include a self-addressed postcard with a box they can check off so they can let you know that they have received your submission and are considering it. It usually takes at least a couple of months, if not longer, to get a response.

Now, this is where the determination part comes in, because unless you're a talented genius or very, very lucky, your first batch of submissions will probably be met with a batch of rejection letters.

Instead of getting discouraged, listen to what they have to say (most publishers will offer remarks or comments if they have time to do so) and try to improve. Get a new batch of submissions together in a few months and try again. Most creators go through this several times before they make it.

My biggest suggestion for people wanting to publish their own books is to visit comic book conventions. - David Scroggy

If you've sent out tons of submissions and you still don't seem to be getting anywhere, and no one seems to recognize the value of your work, there is one other option: self-publishing.

Now, this is a whole other can of worms that I really don't want to open right now. It would take several pages to get into what's involved, but I'll briefly cover some of the basics about how to get started.

The first thing to do would be to try publishing a mini-comic, also called an ash-can. Print your comic up at your local copy shop and ask comic book stores if they'll sell it for you. This can help to teach you the discipline of putting a comic together and getting it out on a regular basis. It also enables you to "test the waters" and see if self-publishing is for you.

There are some books available on how to self-publish. They're usually advertised in the trade journals or magazines. I got my information from a guide to self-publishing that appeared in *Cerebus* (#171). The information, though only three years old, was already hopelessly outdated, but it was enough to help me get a grant from the Xeric Foundation. Established by Peter Laird (co-creator of the *Teenage*



Awakening Comics, published independently by Steve Peters.

Mutant Ninja Turtles), this foundation gives grants to hopeful self-publishers. Those interested can get a brochure by writing to:

Xeric Foundation
Suite 214, 351 Pleasant Street,
Northampton, MA, 01060. U.S.A.

Good luck!!!"

I think the most important thing you'll need is determination and an unwillingness to ever give up.
- Steve Peters

Tom Mason, MainBrain Productions

Tom Mason is a partner in MainBrain Productions, the Malibu, CA-based entertainment development company whose clients include Universal Studios, Klasky Csupo, Gunther-Wahl, Morgan Creek, and DreamWorks SKG. He once took an unforgettable holiday in "Development Hell" with a comic book he created called *Dinosaurs For Hire*.

"The easiest way to *try* to get your comic book published is to assemble your material and start mailing it out to editors and publishers and wait patiently by the mailbox. The photocopied 'thank you, but...' rejection letters will pile up in a matter of

weeks. You'll get dejected and you'll eat too much junk food and watch too much violent non-educational television. Your parents and friends will worry about you. Your hair will fall out. You'll get a cute little twitch in your right eye. It's not impossible to find a comic book publisher; it's just difficult. The truth is, there are more people who want someone to publish their comic book than there are publishers looking for material. So, take a number, then stand in line for a turn that may never be called.

Equally difficult, but far more satisfying, is to publish it yourself. Find the money, organize the talent (unless you're capable of doing everything), cut your own distribution deal, locate a printer, learn the basic two-column accounting system ("money out/money in") and before you know it, you've started your own business, devoted exclusively to publishing your comic book your way. This takes you out of the realm of 'creator' and makes you an 'entrepreneur.' It requires a skill set that is quite a bit different from just writing and drawing. It will also make you wish you paid more attention to that hunchbacked Mrs. Phipps in high school algebra. For some people, that's too much work and too much risk. After all, you could lose money and there's only yourself to blame when things go wrong. For them, there's always the siren call of the mailbox. A lot of people who publish their own comic books do lose money. But there are also those self-publishers who make more money and have more fun than they would if they were published by someone else's company."

It's not impossible to find a comic book publisher; it's just difficult. - Tom Mason

David Scroggy, Dark Horse Comics

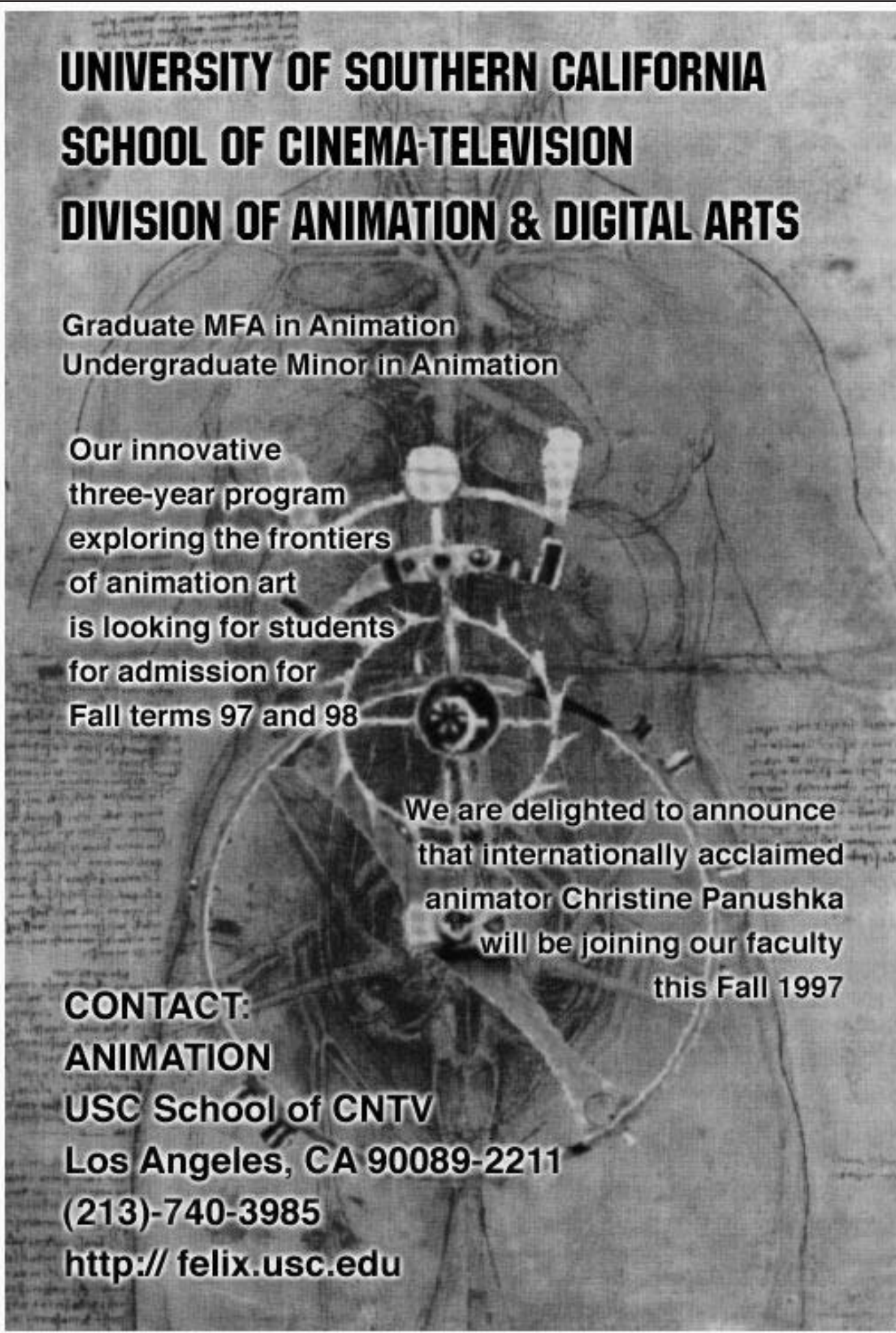
In his twenty-two years in the comics business, David Scroggy has been a retailer, distributor, editor, agent, convention organizer, and trade association officer.



He has been Vice-President of Publishing at Dark Horse since 1993.

"My biggest suggestion for people wanting to publish their own books or see their work published by another company is to visit comic book conventions. Conventions take place yearly in most parts of the country with the largest ones being held in Atlanta, Chicago and of course, San Diego. ComicCon in San Diego (July 17-20) is the place to meet and greet every publisher in the field. At these trade shows, there is also a wide range of educational programs and seminars that are usually available at no additional charge. These conventions are a great way to hear from the pros first hand and get a feel for the business. Then you can really hone your submissions to publishers so that hopefully you will get a positive result.

Dark Horse Comics is always looking for high quality, original new comics. We seek out all genres and types. Our only criteria, regardless of genre, is that they must be good! We have complete submission guidelines for both artists and writers. You may receive a copy of these guidelines by sending a SASE to Dark Horse Comics, 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222. It is also a standard practice in the field to have to sign release forms with every submission."



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Surviving MIP: A Buyer's Guide

by Theresa Plummer-Andrews

Everyone I know goes on the yearly pilgrimage to Cannes exhausted before they even get there. They have spent weeks bringing their notes up to date and juggling meetings in a schedule to which is almost impossible to keep. All of this happens on top of their normal working day, and in addition to the meetings they have had with people flying in to London before going on to Cannes!



Theresa Plummer-Andrews.

Every year myself and my colleague Michael Carrington, swear we're going to organize ourselves so that we have a schedule with some breaks in it. This wondrous thought gets more difficult as the kids business booms and the competition for good programming for the UK market gets greater. The MIP market expands year after year and we now have to try to cover five floors of the most

complicated building ever dreamt up by an architect together, with the new "tent village!" We also have to cover the meetings scheduled in various hotels and apartments along the Croisette. It's hard on the brain so copious notes are made at each meeting. Mind it's a killer for the feet as well, so rule number one is never to buy new shoes to wear during the day at MIP.

A Few Givens

Most days start with the morning ritual of hunting for the MIP badge in your hotel room, finding it and losing it again as you write up the faxes to go back to the London office together with the notes from the previous day's meetings. Then you scramble around again looking for that damn badge with the dreaded thought that if you don't find it you're going to have to pay Reed-Midem a lousy 7000 French francs to replace it, and all the time it's been where you put it earlier - in the pocket of your handbag!

The little morning walk into the Palais is rather pleasant and quite interesting. Some people stroll along knowing they are early for their first meeting whilst others half-run, half-walk, with tight expressions on pale faces, having overslept and missed the 9 a.m. catch up with the boss.

We've all done it at some time or another and it's an awful feeling.

The market for us is a mixture of screenings with distributors and meetings with producers, co-producers, financiers, packagers, video companies, etc. Most of these people are highly professional and have bothered to find out what type of program we show on the BBC, so they don't trouble us with anything unsuitable. In contrast, there are the meetings during which we have to patiently explain that BBC Children's cannot possibly schedule a documentary on transvestites in Outer Mongolia. It's time wasted and is aggravating because it's prevented us from seeing someone else who might have had the animation hit of the century.

Don't ask me why we go through all this on a twice yearly basis, but we do and it's the survival of the fittest!

There is a huge amount of children's programming at MIP and I would say 90% of it is unsuitable for us for one reason or another. Some of it is out of our age range and we spend a great deal of our time explaining what we do and don't show and what our age limits are. Other programs are so violent they're offensive, and yet more is just plain dross and I wonder how the

people raised the money to produce the pilot in the first place. I could put that money to better use!

The last straw was a pitch for a five minute animated series at 2:30 a.m. inside the ladies loo.

Time Flies...

The first two days of the market your feet don't hit the ground. But by the third day "the mid-market blues" descend and a weariness takes over as you haven't found anything wonderful, or if you have, it's going to cost more money than you can afford from the tiny acquisitions budget the BBC allows. You're tired and guilty because you haven't had the time to see all the people who have left messages at the BBC stand - and you want to go home! However, the fourth day dawns and it's back to the old routine. Life's okay and you've found a treasure which will enlighten and enchant the little horrors of England - and you can afford to buy it!

In the good old days we would leave the Palais at about 6 p.m., race along to a cocktail party, head back to the hotel for the luxury of a bath, go out to dinner and then hit the Martinez Bar until the early hours. This lat-

ter activity stopped when producers started pitching new projects at 1 a.m., and the last straw was a pitch for a five minute animated series at 2:30 a.m. inside the ladies loo. Beware, there are a few hours of each day which are mine, even at MIP, and I am inclined to be a little bit touchy at the thought of doing business in the loo!

The End is in Sight!

And so the last day arrives to see us at the BBC stand packing up all the cassettes, scripts, projects and publicity material that we have accumulated during the week to go back to London on a lorry. Then it's off to see the person who had harassed my assistant for an appointment, only to find he/she has already left and their stand is being torn apart. Alternatively the person is still there but the MIP people have whipped up the carpet and disconnected the televisions, which is highly annoying for everyone. Back to the stand at lunchtime to buy champagne for the gallant people who have manned the BBC stand all week. Spare a thought for them as they have been abused, spoken down to and shouted at all week as they have patiently explained to all and sundry that they do not have the diaries of the BBC buyers; that they will give messages to them;

that they are not responsible for the fact that the buyer did not get back with a time and date, etc. It's not an easy job and people should at least try to be polite and not shoot the messenger.

The reward comes, later - when something you have bought captures the imagination of our viewing audience and is successful.

At the airport in Cannes there are all the usual suspects on their way home with blitzed brains, livers and stomachs. We've caught up with most of our personal and business friends again (if only for five minutes in the middle of a corridor), either found or sold some gem programming, met at least a million new people and all we have to do now is get home, unpack and go into the office to do the follow up. Don't ask me why we go through all this on a twice yearly basis, but we do and it's the survival of the fittest! The reward comes, later - when something you have bought captures the imagination of our viewing audience and is successful. Eureka!

Theresa Plummer-Andrews is Head of Acquisitions & Creative Development for the BBC.



Artwork by AWN intern Scott Jennings



A Booming MIFA, But For Whom?



by Buzz Potamkin

It appears that after all these years MIFA is growing up; there is no doubt that the just completed market in Annecy was the best yet—at least, in European terms. For the Americans, it was just another party-filled festival, and not one of the better ones. And therein lies a tale.

Over the past decade, the growth of MIFA, and the Annecy Festival, have been the meters to measure two trends in the world of animation: 1) the dilution of talent; and 2) the decline of the American television animation production industry. The former is a result of the law of unintentioned consequences, while the latter was the basic *raison d'être* of MIFA. Perhaps I should explain.

Where's the Talent Gone?

The dilution of talent was very apparent at the festival. While the overall level of production quality was high, there was a substantial lack of those personal films which always marked the festival in previous years. Why? Two factors are most important; Both are unintentional, one macrocosmic and the other microcosmic.

Macrocosmic - The disappearance of the Communist states caused the demise of the Eastern European versions of the National Film Board of Canada. While they may not have been the most efficient studios, they were most certainly the home of a great many individualistic anima-

tors, the auteurs of much that was good in the '70s and '80s. For many of these folks, the fall of the wall has lead to a much better life — but not to working on their own films. Instead, they're in the Valley, or Phoenix, or Orlando, or someplace working for a very nice wage, but working on a film not of their own. Good for them financially, but bad for the festival.

The story of a starving animator, toiling away in a freezing garret ... has moved from reality to myth.

Microcosmic - The original purpose of MIFA was the furtherance of the European animation industry. In conjunction with its animation unit CARTOON, Plan MEDIA, the entity of the European Union that funds production, was, and is, a very substantial sponsor of MIFA, and MEDIA does not throw around money for no reason. Its primary goal is the creation of Euro-jobs, lots of Euro-jobs. The same may be said for the



The Imperial Palace in Annecy, home to the MIFA.

CNC, the film financing entity of the French government; except, of course, its interest is Franco-jobs. Reading the introductions to the official MIFA guide is illustrative; on two pages, there are six mentions of government funding. Some of this funding supports premiere personal films, and the festival had a special showing of the CARTOON 14. But the overwhelming majority of the funding is for commercial projects. Once again, while this financing supports many jobs, the artists employed are not working on personal films.

The explosive growth of American feature animation production has only furthered the dilution of talent. Talent scouts for the major studios prowled the corridors of the Imperial, and the festival venues, pouncing on talent with golden handcuffs and visions of artistic riches beyond belief. The story of a starving animator, toiling away in a freezing garret for years to create a personal vision, has moved from reality to myth. There are far too many jobs around, and this is probably better for everyone involved - except for those who go to the festival to see the stunning product of artistic individuality.

The Make-Believe U.S. Boom

Okay, but what has all this got to do with the decline of American television animation? Aren't we in the midst of the greatest growth spurt of animation ever, with new and



An elaborately decorated booth for the post-Communist Czech studio Jiriho Trnky (Jiri Trnka) and distributor Kratky Film which exhibited several animated series produced for European countries.

varied venues clamoring for more and more cartoons? Well, yes and no. Moreover, what does this have to do with MIFA?

There is now less original production than there was a decade ago (in the U.S.).

Eight years ago, MIFA was filled with European producers vying to make deals with American distributor/producers. The Europeans offered government financing coupled with access to content-controlled national television networks and merchandising financing. As a result, these deals were done with regularity and with only one caveat: government financing meant local production. Slowly, imperceptibly at first, television production began to flow out of the U.S. With the exception of two major distributor/producers (Warners and Disney), who categorically refused to give up any control, no U.S. studio was immune to the sirens song. Much as the Far East took over the mass-production of animation, Europe began to replace America as the top location for pre- and post-production. At this year's MIFA it was widely predicted that before the next MIFA, Europe will be producing 1,000 episodes per year of television animation - for the first time, a total greater than

U.S. production. (Questions such as, but not limited to, where these programs will be shown, or what, if any, commercial profit will be reached, are far too complex for a market survey to address briefly.)

It is no longer news that the growth the U.S. has seen over the past few years has been in exhibition, not in production, and it has been fueled by the growth in alternative delivery systems: mainly cable/satellite and home video. The previously preponderant network and syndication exhibition flows have declined. There is now less original production than there was a decade ago. In fact, the largest growth spurt in American television animation was the mid-'80s, when, in the span of three years, the domestic market skyrocketed from around 300 to over 1,000 episodes per year. While we all applaud Nick's \$430 million commitment to production over several years, it should be noted that a sum greater than that was spent (in today's dollars) on U.S. syndicated shows in 1985 alone.

Europe will be producing 1,000 episodes per year of television animation.

Europe's Success

Finally MIFA has reached its goal: the creation of an independent European production community. This year, aside from talent recruitment, American producer participation was down from previous markets. American exhibitors were well represented though, having recognized that the glut of European shows means that cheap acquisition deals can be done. The news that one Euro-producer had actually given (yes, for free) a U.S. exhibitor a first-run show came as



The all new "Creative Focus" area of MIFA was designed to attract artists into the market. Here, Jacques Drouin gives a presentation of animation on the pin-screen.

a shock to many other Europeans. However, far from being shocking, it is a sign of the maturity of the European industry, a parallel to what happened domestically a few years back in first-run syndication.

Where will this all lead? Fair question but no answers are apparent yet, except for more questions. Will the European studios produce hits on the level of Disney, Warners or Nick? Will the current high Euro-ratings for Euro-shows hold up as alternative delivery systems spread throughout the continent? Will hold-out American producers finally bow to Euro-pressure and produce in Europe to spread the risk and quiet content concerns? What, exactly, do the children of the world want to watch, and will they ever be allowed to watch it?

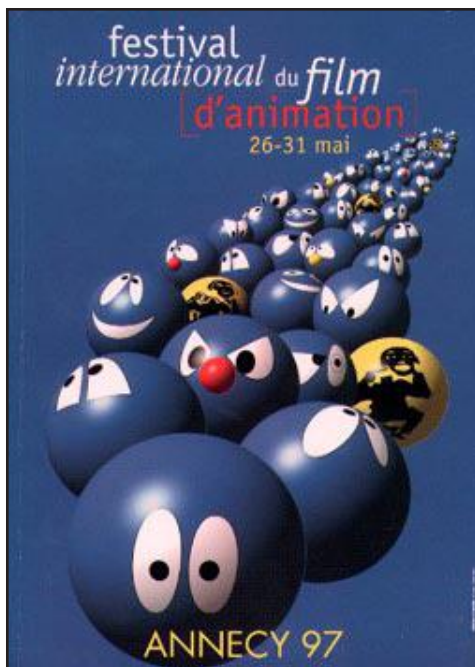
Buzz Potamkin is an award-winning independent producer, best known for The Berenstain Bears and Dr. Seuss. Before he escaped L.A. for New York, he had been President of Southern Star Prods and then Executive Vice President of Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.

Annecy: The Long and The Short of the Carnival by the Lake

by Michel Roudevitch

From the more than 260 films presented both in competition and in panorama at the 21st Annecy Festival held in the Savoy over the course of six sunny days in May, many audience members awarded their highest marks to the famous duo from Bristol, Wallace and Gromit. Their papa, Nick Park, was very busy with the preparation of his first feature-length animation. Therefore, he could only get free in time to arrive for the Awards ceremony, where he received the Public Prize, bestowed on the most famous window cleaners in the kingdom (*A Close Shave*).

This award was certainly not a surprise as our two comrades have already won Oscars, and been spanned with medals like superstars. But it was particularly symbolic as a tribute to the quantity and quality of puppet and clay animation that was shown, and to the blossoming of English production. Great Britain received six awards in all, including the prize for best short television series (*Driving Test* by Candy Guard), best television special (*Famous Fred* by Joanna Quinn), best advertising film (*Martell: Legend* by Pat Gavin), and of course, for the



school presenting the best selection of student films (The Royal College of Art, London). That is almost a third of the prizes!

The distinction of a number of art college films bodes well for the future, with particularly fine promise from the Belgians. *Lily and the Wolf* by Florence Henrard (La Cambre Studio) won the prize for the Best Graduation Film. It merits, in addition to a prize for freshness, a gold medal for humor. The first version of a mermaid coming out of a wave, Florence Henrards *Out of Bath* received a mention for its humor and narrative qualities at Annecy 1995.

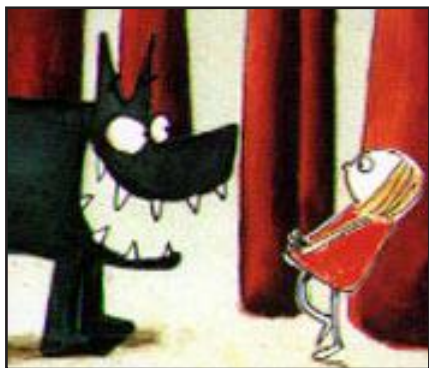
The quality of the first time films were also remarkable. Starting with the Grand Prize, *The Old Woman and the Pigeons*, a comedy ironically described as "nostalgic and cruel," by the Frenchman Sylvain Chomet, who trained in the London animation studios. He evokes very

well a certain Parisian atmosphere, delightfully old-fashioned, in accord with the backgrounds of Nicolas de Crécy (a longtime collaborator). The only intelligible words are bits of conversation between American tourists mixed into a very elaborate soundtrack. This counterpoint, besides being quite funny, is a passport to better international distribution. Another first film made in France, *Come See, Dear!*, is a quick sketch by Carole Fouquet that makes fun of an intimate phone conversation (all in English), and is justified by a presumed homage to Chas Addams.

Moscow's Garri Bardine expresses himself in a delicious blend of American, French and Russian in his model animation *Puss in Boots*. He received a special mention "for the direction and the characters" for this film. Bardine won a Grand Prize at Annecy 1991 for his adaptation of a Perrault tale in the same style: *The Grey Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood*. This year, he also presented in competition an advertising film for Coca Cola called *Troika Dolls*. He declared with humor that he considers himself "an old animator and a young capitalist."

It is humanly impossible to attend all the multiple discussions, panels, lectures, round tables, expositions, homages and retrospectives.

If old Russia made magic with the bewitching *The Mermaid*, painted on glass by Alexander Petrov (Special Jury Prize), one could discern



Lily and the Wolf by Florence Henrard won the prize for the best graduation film.



Old Lady and The Pigeons, the Annecy 1997 Grand Prix winning film by Sylvain Chomet.

the title "citizen of the world" in the flying Dutchman Paul Driessen, author of *The End of the World in Four Seasons*. With its eight chilling little dramas playing out simultaneously on as many areas of the screen, it deserved the International Jury Prize it received, honoring its innovative singularity. Driessen himself moves at full speed, sometimes teaching, always drawing, to the four corners of the planet.

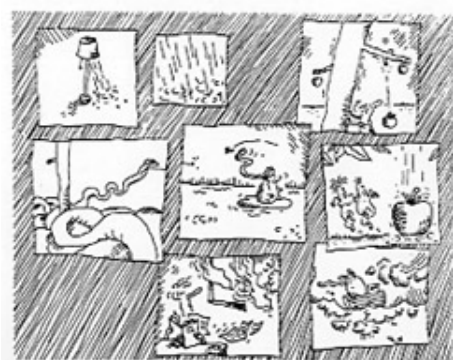
In the category of long television series, *Duckman*, an episode by Raymie Muzquiz, produced by Klasky-Csupo, won this year (Special Prize for a series of 13 to 26 minutes) over Warner Bros.' *Superman*. Klasky-Csupo won this prize two years ago with *Aahhh!!! Real Monsters*, which was in competition again this year, so while Klasky-Csupo garnered yet another award, this recognition did not make any groundbreaking progress on the television landscape. *The Maxx* by Greg Vanzo was also in the television competition. Other highlights of the competition were new episodes of *Pinky and the Brain* (Warner Brothers), a Canadian revival of *Little Lulu* (Cinar), a touching British "Toy Story" on cels (*The Forgotten Toys* by Graham Ralph, a 25-minute special), and other English (*Further Adventures of Peter Rabbit from Beatrix Potter* by Geoff Dunbar) and French (*Tales of Broca Street* from Pierre Gripari) tales. The screens were well provisioned

with Polish Trolls (*Film under a Frightful Title* by Laszek Galyz), crazy cows (*Destination Moon* by the American Gordon Clark), sullen doggies (*Bedlam* by British Alison Snowden and David Fine), and even baby dinosaurs (*Dino in the Bushes* by Jean-François Bourrel) and warlike insects (an episode of the series *Insektors* by Georges Lacroix), these last two shows were made in France on computers using 3D modeling.

New computer technology remained at the forefront...

With Or Without A Computer

New computer technology remained at the forefront, introducing us into a post-impressionist landscape of autumn colors for the glory of Martell cognac, which was already mentioned among the British prize-winners, and in other advertising entries like, *Fantômes Smarties* and *Snickers* by ILM. Computers also played a part to various degrees in four of the six feature-length animations in competition. *James and the Giant Peach* by the American Henry Selick won the prize in this category. Freely adapted from the book of the same name by Roald Dahl, the film combined live-action characters with puppets in its opening and closing, and used computer graphics for daz-



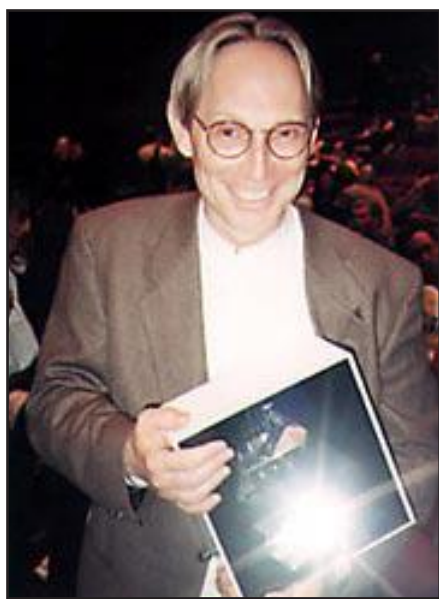
Paul Driessen's *The End of the World in Four Seasons* received a special jury prize.

zle in an ocean sequence. Based on the story by Gianni Rodari, *The Blue Arrow* by Italian Enzo d'Alo is a "Toy Story" in traditional animation for the very young. This film however used 2D computer graphics well to create a charming confusion of wheeled vehicles or airport traffic as it happens in the urban milieu. The World is a Big Chelm by Albert Kaminski is a French/German/Hungarian co-production inspired by various tales of I.B. Singer. One sequence, the destruction of a village by a golem, utilized computer compositing without any undue clash, thereby combining drawn characters with 3D computer graphics. Computer generated cockroaches made themselves at home, along with some key casting of real roaches, in the tenement *Joe's Apartment* by John Payson. If we are to believe *Liquid TV's* press releases then according to the director, this film is autobiographical! Was that also

the case with two feature-length road-trips made with cel animation? *Werner—Eat My Dust* by German Michael Schaack, the second screen adaptation of a comic book by Brösel, features a motorcycle trip in a rural landscape, fueled by beer, which gets a little repetitious by the end. The frightful, dirty and mean libidinous adolescents of Mike Judges (*Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*) manage all possible calamities in 77 minutes, with the



Garri Bardine (right), director of *Puss in Boots* (a special jury prize winner) and *Troika Dolls* (commercial competition entrant), with Ron Diamond.



James and the Giant Peach director Henry Selick beams with his Grand Prix award for Best Animated Feature Film.

apparent complicity of many spectators, even President Clinton!

Perspectives and Retrospectives

In various places around the festival or out in the town, special shows lure you to (re)discover someone's work, either in a gallery show or projection. This year, homage was paid to Renzo Kinoshita, the famous animator who died recently and was one of the pillars of the Hiroshima Festival (Peace and Love), a testimony to his times with ascerbic humor. The Frenkel brothers, pioneers of animation in Egypt were also on display, as was Stephen Bosustow (the owner of UPA), Fedor Khitruk (the grand old man of Russian animation), and Andrei Khrzanovski, who screened a preliminary version of *A Long Voyage*, a collaboration with Tonino Guerra that was based on the caricatures drawn by Federico Fellini. Also Raoul Servais from Ostende, the maker of *Taxandria*, added the premiere of a new flight, *Moths*.

Annecy Without End

I haven't even mentioned meeting the Hungarian Ferenc Cako, the Czech Bretislav Pojar, the Canadians Jacques Drouin and Pierre

Hébert, the Polish Piotr Kamler, nor even the large Bororama (works of Borowczyk which are on display at the Castle Museum until September)... It is humanly impossible to attend all the multiple discussions, panels, lectures, round tables, expositions, homages and retrospectives. This superabundance is perhaps necessary to respond to the diverse demands of the festival audience which grows larger all the time, but just how far can it go? This festival in Savoy has come a long way from the great canonical jousts of the 1960s, and it has inspired dozens of "emulations" all over the world — not just other festivals but many variations and developments beyond the hopes and dreams of the founders of Annecy.

This tendency toward the quantitative, will it be equaled with the qualitative?

However, there is the question of organizing this festival every year. This might not be the best decision considering the difficulty of getting new, good, films and getting these films in only a one year turnaround. Even after two years, you can't help but feel a sense of déjà vu, of repetition that seems to celebrate the same films forever. Not to minimize the merits of Wallace and Gromit, or to complain that some other films mentioned above, *Puss in Boots* by Bardine and *The End of the World* by Driessen,



The Blue Arrow by Enzo d'Aló.



The awards ceremony, from left to right: John Payson (*Joe's Apartment*), Paul Driessen (*The End of the World in Four Seasons*), Nick Park (*A Close Shave*), Candy Guard (*Pond Life*), Gil Alkabetz (*Rubicon*), and Hans Spillaert (*Under the Waxing Moon*).

were already seen at Annecy 1995. (These two films were completed too late to be included in competition, but were projected at night on a giant screen beside the lake.) You can't blame serving them up again — their absence would have been cruelly missed this year!

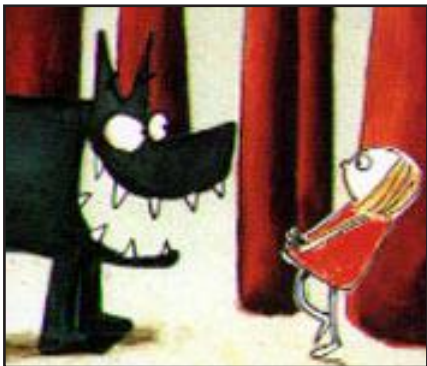
Since the appearance of MIFA in 1985, the festival has had two poles of attraction. Now, the festival and the market cannot exist without each other. The implant of an international marketplace in the heart of the festival is supposed to preserve the creative geniuses of the "cultural ghetto" by bringing them a healthy commercial counterpoint. This tendency toward the quantitative, will it be equaled with the qualitative? Will the sheer amount of events be pared down for the best? Its important not to forget that in the long run — and Disney is always there to remind us — quality pays!

Michel Roudevitch is a freelance journalist who has been attending the Annecy festival since its' inception. He writes for a number of French magazines and newspapers, including Liberation, Positif, and Le Technicien du Film.

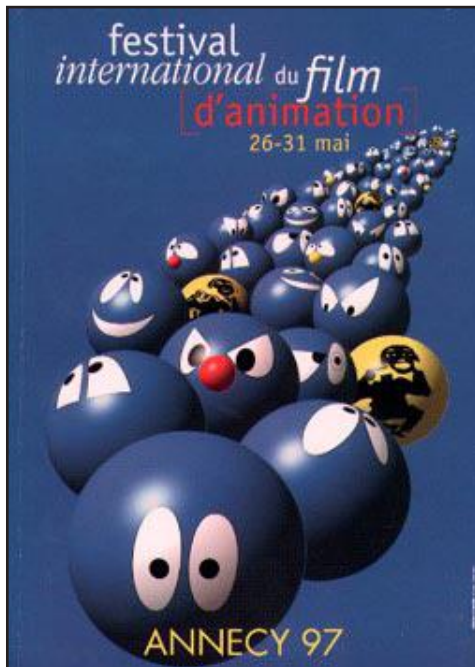
Carnaval en court et en long au bord du lac.

Sur plus de 260 films présentés, en compétition et en panorama, aux 21^{ème} festivités savoyardes - six jours ensoleillés en mai - beaucoup de spectateurs ont accordé leurs faveurs au fameux duo de Bristol : Wallace et Gromit. Leur papa, Nick Park, très occupé par la préparation d'un premier long métrage, ne se libéra que peu avant la proclamation du palmarès pour recevoir le enième prix (du public) décerné aux plus illustres laveurs de carreaux de la couronne (*A Close Shave*).

Cette distinction certes sans surprise (nos deux compères étant déjà oscarisés et constellés de médailles comme de super magnums) n'en est pas moins emblématique, outre d'une bonne santé de l'animation en volumes (très présente en poupées et pâte à modeler), de la toujours performante production anglaise : la Grande-Bretagne totalise six distinctions - dont la palme pour une courte série, TV (*Driving Test* de Candy Guard), pour un spécial TV (*Famous Fred* de Joanna Quinn), pour le film publicitaire (*Martell : Legend* de Pat Gavin) et bien sûr pour l'école ayant présenté la



Lili et le Loup de Florence Henrad.



meilleure sélection (au Royal College of Art - London), soit le tiers du palmarès !

Il faut noter le bon niveau de nombre d'écoles d'art, faisant bien augurer de la relève avec de belles promesses belges : *Lili et le loup* de Florence Henrad (prix du meilleur film de fin d'études (atelier de la Cambre) aurait bien mérité (outre la palme de la fraîcheur) une médaille d'or de la drôlerie (2). A remarquer aussi la qualité des premières oeuvres, à commencer par le grand prix : *La Vielle Dame et les Pigeons*, comédie ironiquement intitulée "nostalgique et cruelle" du français Sylvain Chomet, qui s'est exercé à l'animation dans les studios londoniens, avant d'exprimer au mieux une certaine atmosphère parisienne, surannée à souhait, en accord avec les décors de Nicolas de Crécy (résultat d'une déjà longue complicité). Les seules paroles intelligibles sont échangées par des

par Michel Roudevitch

touristes américains dans une bande son très élaborée. Ce contrepoint, d'ailleurs assez cocasse, est un passeport de surcroît, pour une distribution internationale. Une autre première oeuvre made in France, *Chéri viens voir !* brève pochade de Carole Fouquet brocardant le tête-à-tête télé, entièrement dialoguée en anglais, est justifiée par un hommage revendiqué à Chas Addams.

Le moscovite Garri Bardine, dont *Le Chat Botté* (et crotté) en modélage animé a décroché une mention spéciale "pour la réalisation et les personnages" s'exprimant en un savoureux sabir américano-franco-russe (1), présentait en compétition un publicitaire à la gloire de Coca-Cola (*Troika Dolls*) a déclaré avec humour qu'il se considérait tout à la fois comme un vieil animateur et un jeune capitaliste".

Il est humainement impossible d'embrasser totalement l'éventail des multiples débats, colloques, conférences, tables rondes, expos, hommages et rétrospectives

Si la vieille Russie fit merveille avec une envoutante *Sirène* en peinture sur verre d'Alexandre Petrov (prix spécial du jury), on pourrait décerner le titre de citoyen du monde au hollandais volant Paul Driessen, auteur à part entière de *La Fin du Monde en quatre saisons* en huit frémisants petits drames interférant simultanément en autant de cadres sur l'écran (prix du jury international gratifiant sa singularité novatrice). Il se propulse



La vieille dame et les pigeons de Sylvain Chomet.

lui-même à tout vent, avec ses fouilles volantes, tantôt enseignant, toujours dessinant, aux quatre coins de la planète.

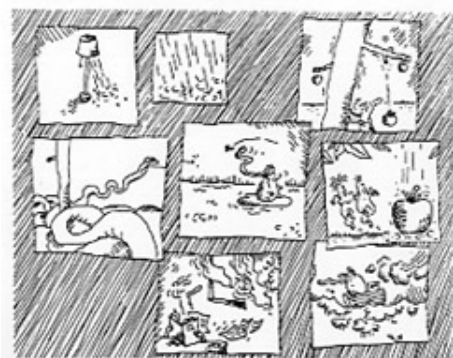
L'ordinateur demeure à l'ordre du jour

Du côté des longues séries à épisodes, que *Duckman* (un épisode de Raymie Muzquiz, produit par Klasky-Csupo) l'ait emporté cette année (prix spécial pour une série de 13 à 26 mn) sur *Superman* (Warner Bros), ne bouleverse pas le Landerneau télévisuel. Klasky-Csupo figurait déjà au palmarès il y a deux ans, avec *Aahhh!!! Real Monsters* (de nouveau présenté en compétition cette année). Aussi *The Maxx* de Greg Vanzo. Outre de nouveaux épisodes de *Pinky and the Brain* (Warner Bros), une resucée canadienne de *Little Lulu* (Cinar), un touchant *Toy Story* britannique sur cellulo *The Forgotten Toys* de Graham Ralph, un spécial de 25 mn), et d'autres contes anglais *The Further Adventures of Peter Rabbit* (d'après Beatrix Potter), ou français *Les Contes de la rue Broca* (d'après Pierre Gripari), les écrans furent bien approvisionnés en Trolls polonais (*Film under a frightful title* de Laszek Galyz), vache folle (*Destination Moon* de l'Américain Gordon Clark), toutous atrabilaire (*Bedlam* british d'Alison Snowden et David Fine), voire bébé dinosaure (*Dino dans les buissons*) de Jean-François

Bourrel) ou belliqueux insectes (un épisode de la série *Insektors* de Georges Lacroix), ces deux derniers made in France sur ordinateur 3D.

Avec ou sans ordinateur

L'ordinateur demeure à l'ordre du jour, nous introduisant dans un paysage post-impressionniste avec des dorures automnales pour la gloire du cognac Martell (déjà cité au palmarès dans les performances britanniques), et dans d'autres déclinaisons publicitaires : *Smarties* (Fantôme), *Snickers* (ILM). Il s'intègre, diversément dosé, dans quatre des six longs métrages présentés en compétition. *James et la pêche géante* de l'Américain Henry Selick (primé dans cette catégorie), librement inspiré de l'ouvrage homonyme, de Roald Dahl, combine (en ouverture et en final) des vues réelles avec ses marionnettes, corsées de numérisation pour une séquence en haute mer. *La Flèche bleue* de l'italien Enzo d'Alo, un *Toy Story* pour tout petits en dessins animés (d'après un récit de Gianni Rodari), a bénéficié de l'assistance ordinographique 2D pour permettre à un charmant tohu-bohu de véhicules à roulettes ou aéroportés de circuler comme il convient en milieu urbain. *Le Monde est un grand Chelm* d'Albert Kaminski, une coproduction franco-germano-hongroise s'inspirant de divers récits d'I.B. Singer comporte une séquence en



La fin du monde en quatre saisons de Paul Driessen, a reçu le prix spécial du Jury.

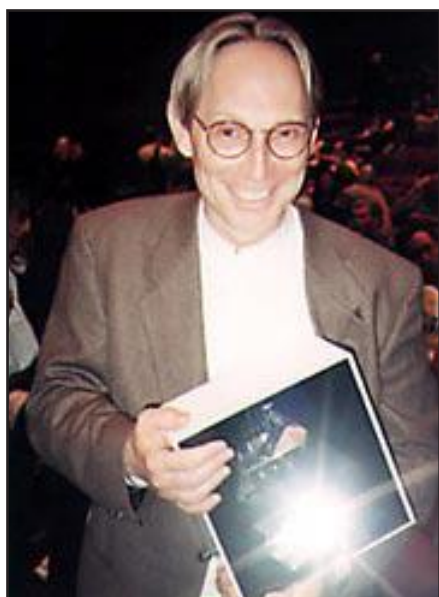
images de synthèse (la destruction d'un village par un golem) combinant sans heurt personnages dessinés et images de synthèse 3D. Des bestioles numérisées font bon ménage avec un important casting de vrais cafards dans la bicoque, de John Payson (*Joe's Apartment*). A en croire le réalisateur (et producteur pince-sans-rire de Liquid TV), son récit serait en partie autobiographique. Est-ce le cas des deux longs parcours sur cellulo ? Si le *Werner-Eat my Dust* de l'allemand Michael Schaack (seconde adaptation à l'écran d'une BD de Brösel) road movie à moto en milieu rural, carburant à la bière tourne un peu en rond à la longue, les affreux, sales et méchants ados libidineux de Mike Judge (*Beavis and Butt-Head do America*) accumulent les calamités en 77 minutes, avec apparemment la complicité de beaucoup de spectateurs, en embobinant même le président Clinton.



Garri Bardine (à droite), réalisateur du *Le chat botté* et *Troika Dolls*, avec Ron Diamond.

Perspectives et rétrospectives

D'autres espaces disséminés à l'épicentre Bonlieu, ou en divers lieux de la ville, incitaient à (re)découvrir une oeuvre, déployée sous la cimaise ou en projection. Cette année un hommage fut rendu à Renzo Kinoshita, fameux cinégraphiste récemment disparu, l'un des piliers du festival d'Hiroshima (*Peace and Love*), un témoin de son temps à l'humour acerbe,



Henry Selick, auteur de *James et la pêche géante* avec son Grand Prix.

aux frères Frenkel, pionniers de l'animation en Egypte, à Stephen Bosustow, pionnier de la UPA, à Fedor Khitruk, doyen de l'animation russe, aussi à André Khrzanovski, qui nous offrit le premier état d'un long voyage, (entrepris avec son complice Tonino Guerra) inspiré des caricatures de Federico Fellini. Itou de l'Ostendais Raoul Servais - l'auteur de *Taxandria* - ajouta les prémisses d'un nouvel envol (*Papillons de Nuit*).

Annecy sans fin

Et nous n'avons rien dit des retrouvailles avec le Hongrois Ferenc Cako, le Tchèque Bretislav Pojar, les Canadiens Jacques Drouin et Pierre Hébert, le polonais Piotr Kamler, non plus d'un grand Bororama (Borowczyk "accroché" jusqu'en septembre au Musée Chateau...). Il est humainement impossible d'embrasser totalement l'éventail des multiples débats, colloques, conférences, tables rondes, expos, hommages et rétrospectives... surabondance peut-être nécessaire pour répondre à diverses demandes de festivaliers sans cesse plus nombreux. Mais jusqu'où cela peut-il aller ? Transporté loin des grandes joutes cannoises dans les années 60 (après quelques galops

d'essais sur la Croisette) le festival savoyard, suscita une véritable émulation à travers le monde, non seulement d'autres manifestations mais de multiples vocations avec des développements imprévisibles à l'origine.

Il est question de renouveler annuellement ces rencontres (actuellement biennales). On peut douter de cette opportunité, l'innovation n'étant pas nécessairement au rendez-vous - sinon l'inflation - dans un délai aussi rapproché. Même, après deux ans, on ne peut s'empêcher d'éprouver, sinon une impression de redite, un sentiment de déjà vu, ne serait-ce que de célébrer indéfiniment les mêmes films. Loin de minimiser les mérites de Wallace & Gromit, ou de déplorer que d'autres bandes citées plus haut - *Le Chat Botté* de Bardine, *La Fin du monde* de Driessen - furent déjà programmées à Annecy 95 (parvenues trop tard à destination, n'ayant pu être soumises à l'attention du comité de sélection, elles furent projetées en nocturne sur écran géant au bord du lac), on ne peut qu'approuver ce juste repêchage, leur absence aurait été cruellement ressentie cette année !

Depuis l'avènement du Mifa (en 1985), la biennale a désormais deux pôles d'attraction. Et pas question d'envisager une alternance, il s'agit de complémentarité. L'implantation du marché international au sein du festival est censée préserver les créatifs du "ghetto culturel" en leur apportant un salutaire contrepoint commercial. Cette tendance vers le



La cérémonie de remise de prix avec, de gauche à droite: John Payson (*Joe's Apartment*), Paul Driessen (*La fin du monde en quatre saisons*), Nick Park (*A Close Shave*), Candy Guard (*Pond Life*), Gil Alkabetz (*Rubicon*), et Hans Spillaert (*Sous la lune couchante*).

quantitatif ira-t-elle de pair avec le qualitatif ? Matin des magiciens ou miroir aux alouettes ? Il importe de ne pas oublier qu'à longue échéance - et Disney toujours recommencé était là, lui aussi, pour nous le rappeler - la qualité paye !

Cette tendance vers le quantitatif ira-t-elle de pair avec le qualitatif ?

- (1) Bardine avait déjà décroché un grand prix (à Annecy 91) pour une adaptation d'un conte de Perrault de même veine *Le Loup gris et le Petit Chaperon Rouge*.
- (2) Les premiers pas d'une ondiine sortant de l'onde *Sortie de bain* de Florence Henrad furent déjà mentionnés (pour son humour et ses qualités narratives) à Annecy 95



La Flèche Bleue de Enzo d'Aló.

Michel Roudevitch est un journaliste freelance qui fréquente le Festival d'Annecy depuis ses origines. Il écrit notamment pour Liberation, Positif et Le Technicien du Film et de la Video.



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Hercules Comes to the Suburban Octoplex

by John Rundin

Editor's Note: For our review of *Hercules* we asked Dr. John Rundin, a University of California at Los Angeles Classics Professor, to compare this beautiful Disney romp to the ancient classic tales.

If the film *Hercules* had told the story of Hercules as it was known to the ancients, the Disney Corporation would be in far more trouble with the Southern Baptists than it is now. Perhaps the Baptists might have overlooked Hercules' vocation for homicide. In the course of his life, he was responsible for the death of, among others, his first wife Megara, three of his children, his girlfriend Hippolyta, his martial arts instructor Chiron and his music instructor Linus. Conservative eyebrows might have been raised, however, at the circumstances of Hercules' conception. He was conceived when Zeus, though married to Hera, made love with Alcmena in one of his numerous adulterous dalliances; Alcmena was a happily married woman, and to overcome her scruples Zeus had to fool her by disguising himself as her husband. Hercules' own sex life would certainly have been found objectionable. In one exploit, he is reported — while drunk, yet — to have impregnated the fifty daughters of Thespius in a single night. Certainly the Baptists would have felt obligated to censure his transvestitism while he served as the boy-toy of Queen Omphale, not to mention his enthusiastically pederastic affair with the boy Hylas.

Divine Inspiration

None of this adult material makes it into Disney's highly entertaining children's movie, *Hercules*, which has only scattered and garbled points of contact with the ancient tradition. In the ancient stories, Hercules has to rescue his new bride and second wife, Deianeira, when the centaur Nessus tries to rape her as she rides across a river on the centaur's back. In the Disney version of the story, Nessus is wading through a river and carrying on with Megara, who, according to the ancients, is Hercules' first wife, when Hercules comes upon the two of them and, seeing Megara for the first time, tries to rescue her from the centaur. This is typical of the way that *Hercules* uses the ancient sources. It takes a bit from here and a bit from there and assembles the bits into a new whole. In the Disney story, Hercules rides Pegasus, fights the Minotaur and encounters the Gorgon. In the ancient tradition these are the deeds of other heroes. There is much pure invention in the film as well. The satyr Philoctetes,

a cutesy Disney innovation, serves as Hercules' trainer. The treatment of ancient art is much the same as the treatment of ancient narrative. Obviously, the creators of *Hercules* spent some time looking at Greek art as they did reading Greek stories of heroes. Clever takes and parodies on Greek vases, sculpture and architecture abound in the movie. Yet these details are subordinate to a modern artistic vision. This inventive recycling of ancient narrative and art is not bad, and, in fact, not too different from the ways in which the ancients themselves constantly reworked traditional materials. But don't imagine you will learn much about the Classical world by viewing the movie; it's far more concerned with modern life in the United States.

If the film *Hercules* had told the story of Hercules as it was known to the ancients, the Disney Corporation would be in far more trouble with the Southern Baptists than it is now.



Pegasus the flying horse, Phil the hero-training satyr, and Hercules, the boy wonder enter the dark city of Thebes, aka "The Big Olive." © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

Mortal Concerns

The traditional tales of Hercules involve themes of human importance. They can be read as meditations on the ambivalent nature of the violent hero. As Timothy McVeigh returned home from the Gulf War a military hero and, subject to delusions, killed hundreds of his fellow citizens in a bizarre parody of a military action, so Hercules returns home from his own heroic



Hercules in one of his attempts to prove himself a hero, battles Hydra, a 3-D computer-animated monster. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

exploits and, in a fit of insanity, mistakes his first wife and his children for enemies and slaughters them. In general, the violent hero's values are incompatible with domestic happiness. Hercules meets his agonizing mortal end when his second wife, Deianeira, using a potion on him to rekindle his passion for her because, like a good Greek warrior, he has taken a mistress while away at war, accidentally poisons him. Hercules' life can also be read as an expression of human hopes for salvation. He is born the bastard son of Zeus and a mortal woman. Hera, Zeus' wife, hates and persecutes him throughout his life because he is a product of her husband's infidelity. What better image of the human condition, caught as it is between divine aspirations and physical needs, than Hercules, who was of divine birth, but somehow disinherited, alienated from his divinity? Hercules incarnates humankind's struggle with its innate physicality, powerlessness and inadequacy. He is obsessed with food and sex. He is forced to play the low-



Hercules' love interest, Megara, is a surprisingly liberated heroine for a Disney animation film. She is, of course, under the influence of the satanic Hades. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

status role of slave to his wimpy cousin Eurystheus, who, through Hera's malign cunning, enjoys a kingdom which was supposed to go to Hercules. Hercules is sometimes portrayed as rather dimwitted and never as particularly bright. Amazingly, however, through plodding labor and discipline, he manages to reclaim his divinity. He alone of all mortals is welcomed after his physical death into the company of the Olympian gods, where he resides accompanied by his divine wife Hebe. There's hope for us all!

Modern-Day Metaphors

You won't find much of this stuff in Disney's *Hercules*. Instead we find modern American psychopathologies. Disney's Magic Kingdom has little more tolerance for moral complexity and ambiguity than the most red-faced audience member on the *Jerry Springer Show*. The film's treatment of Meg, Hercules' love interest, is an apparent exception to this principle. A surprisingly liberated heroine for a Disney animation film, she is, of course, under the influence of the satanic Hades. There can be no other explanation for her assertiveness. Aside from her, things are black and white. Disney's Hercules, unlike the ancient Hercules, is pure good. And evil is not only external to him but to his nuclear family as well. He is the legitimate son of a loving father Zeus and a loving mother Hera, whose cloying interactions make Ward and June Cleaver's relationship seem complexly nuanced. Evil is instead concentrated in the sorts of places Americans like to imagine it - among big-city inhabitants like those of Thebes, a barely disguised New York. The Thebans' dark beards and often swarthy skin tones contrast well with the blue-eyed, light-haired members of Hercules' Olympian family. Evil is located particularly in the film's bad guy, Hades. His resemblance to a Jewish Hollywood agent is a nice foil to



In the film, Hercules becomes a celebrity and a merchandising phenomenon, proving Disney can playfully poke fun at their own game. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

Hercules', well, Aryanness.

The aesthetic and marketing choices of *Hercules*' makers have apparently led them to pander to the values of white suburbia with its *Leave to Beaver* family values, its distrust of big-city minorities and its large disposable income. *Hercules* winds up an entertaining, witty and safe children's tale of male adolescence in the suburbs. It even features what appears to be the filmmakers' anachronistic vision of an ancient shopping mall — a colonnade where ancient Greek youths, who, strangely, toss around a discus as if it were an archaic frisbee, hang out like their modern suburban counterparts. The film's background music, provided by the gospel chorus of Muses, is as modern in spirit as any that could be heard in middle-class America. If one excepts centaurs and satyrs, the Muses are the only patently identifiable members of ethnic minorities in the film. They're African-Americans, and they're neatly segregated into their familiar niche in the suburban landscape — they're entertainers. Which is just fine. You wouldn't want Hercules to marry one of them, would you?

John Rundin received a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley,) in Classics. He is now a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA.)

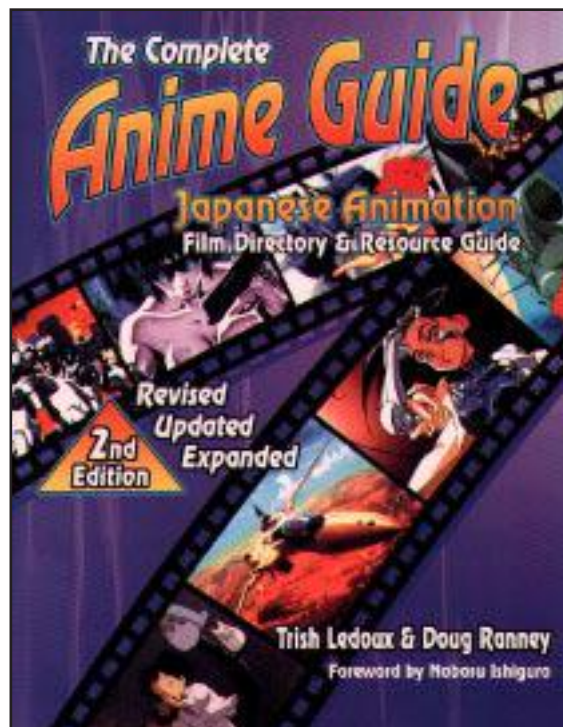
The Complete Anime Guidebook

Book review by Brian Camp

Serious fans of Japanese animation have generally had difficulty finding sufficient written information and critical evaluation to help them seek out titles to match their particular tastes. Fans of the anime noir style, for instance, exemplified by the darkly atmospheric imagery and high-tech urban crime stories created by Yoshiaki Kawajiri (*Wicked City*, *Demon City Shinjuku*, *Cyber City Oedo*), have no convenient way, other than scanning the often misleading text on the video box, to identify similarly styled efforts available in video stores. Such films as *Crying Freeman*, *The Professional: Golgo 13*, *Suikoden-Demon Century*, and the newly released *Black Jack* and *Peacock King* would be missed. As would be the films on the underground fan circuit like Kawajiri's unreleased *Midnight Eye Goku* and such recent hits in Japan as *X: The Movie* and the made-for-video *BioHunter* and *Psycho Diver*.

While there are slick publications aimed at the anime audience, as well as dozens of Internet web sites, the writing in these venues is too often wedded to the style of the fan press, with an emphasis on plot synopses, character descriptions and the reviewer's own intractable opinions. A particular work's artistic style or place in animation history is often overlooked. Certainly, such

well-illustrated magazines as *Animerica* and *Protoculture Addicts* work hard to keep state-side anime fans informed of new releases, both here and in Japan, and include some fine staff writers. However, they lack the in-depth commentary necessary to help the more rigorous fans sort out this vast field.



Animerica is particularly loaded with information and features, but only occasionally in some of the short reviews do we find anything in the way of genuine criticism ("analysis of qualities and evaluation of comparative worth; especially, the definition and judgment of literary or artistic work," as defined in Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary.)

Resource Central

The new revised, updated and

expanded second edition of *The Complete Anime Guide: Japanese Animation Film Directory and Resource Guide*, by Trish Ledoux (editor of *Animerica*) and Doug Ranney, meets a significant part of the audience's need for greater information. Functioning primarily as a consumer guide, its bulk is devoted to a section of short reviews and synopses of over 1000 titles currently available on video in the U.S. These reviews offer a great deal of valuable information to those fans willing to scour them for clues to other titles they might enjoy. Some of the reviews are very well written, either very perceptive about the works (*Arcadia of My Youth*, *Ghost in the Shell*, *GoShogun: The Time Etranger*, *Night on the Galactic Railroad*, *Patlabor 2*) or very informative (*Blue Seed*, *Lupin III*, *Macross Plus*, *The Professional: Golgo 13*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*,

Wings of Honneamise) but, since they are unsigned, one can only guess as to which of the four contributing editors and 11 contributors has the most insight. A particularly helpful feature of this section is the emphasis on creative personnel, including director, animation director, character designer, mecha designer, production designer and composer; many of whom are listed in the reviews with cross references in parentheses to their additional

credits. Another valuable feature is the citation of manga (comic book) sources where applicable and an indication of the manga's availability in the U.S.

The book stands out as an invaluable compendium of current information.

The reviews, in fact, constitute the one major expansion of the book's initial 1995 edition. In the earlier volume, the capsule entries for each title were simply short synopses. There was some compensation in the 1995 version, however, in a nine-page section entitled "Thumbnail Synopses of Selected Shows" with longer reviews of 71 titles divided into ten genres like Action-Adventure, Drama, Science Fiction, Adults Only, Cyberpunk, and so on. Some of these reviews are repeated in the new edition and those that aren't repeated are often superior to their counterparts in the new book.

The other two text chapters in the first edition are repeated in the second with some new material reflecting new releases. "Animated Television Series" offers descriptions of every Japanese animated TV series to be broadcast on U.S. television from *Astro Boy* (1963) to *Samurai Pizza Cats* (1996). While highly informative, this section takes up far too much space that could have been better appropriated to an updated "Thumbnail Synopses," or "Best of Anime" section or even a historical overview. Many of these series may not be of much interest to true anime fans, because of the poor dubbing and exten-

sive re-editing so many of them underwent.

Misunderstanding Genres

The second text chapter "Anime Genres" singles out four genres unique to Japanese animation, defined by the author of this section, Trish Ledoux, as "the four most exciting, least-easily-achievable-in-live-action genres: cyberpunk, giant robots, the anime noir thriller, and the romantic 'love' comedy" (author's emphasis). "Cyberpunk" focuses on futuristic crime titles such as *Akira*, *Patlabor*, *Ghost in the Shell*, *Bubblegum Crisis*, and *Dominion Tank Police*. "Giant Robots" offers a handful of "mecha-themed" titles, such as *Kishin Corps*, *Armored Trooper Votoms*, *Gunbuster*, and, of course, *Giant Robo*. "Anime noir" serves up the expected Kawajiri titles, *Wicked City*, *Demon City Shinjuku*, and *Ninja Scroll*, and is then stretched to include such horror/occult titles as *Devilman*, *Ogre Slayer*, *Vampire Hunter D*, and *Vampire Princess Miyu*. Finally, "Romantic Comedy" highlights three popular series based on the manga of Rumiko Takahashi, *Ranma 1/2*, *Urusei Yatsura (Lum)*, and *Maison Ikkoku*, along with *Project A-ko*, *Tenchi Muyo!*, *Kimagure Orange Road*, and *Oh My Goddess!*.

Genre is a crucial issue in any discussion of anime since popular genres tend to fuel anime production, rather than famous characters, innovative animators, or other marketable elements. Ledoux's approach offers a convenient, if arbitrary, grouping which lacks a basic

understanding of genre. Cyberpunk is described rather broadly as "stories showcasing the cutting edge of science and technology set in the distant-yet-closer-than-we-think world of tomorrow." Horror may in fact be anime's equivalent of noir, but more for reasons of style than for Ledoux's questionable citation of the horror titles' "unmistakable noir heroes, who exist in a world of hostile forces in which only they can provide salvation." Her approach omits other significant anime genres, particularly that of space science fiction which put Japanese animation on the map in the first place. While it is certainly achievable in live action (witness: *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and Japan's own *Message from Space*), rarely have stories of space voyages, interplanetary conflict and civil war been told so intricately and extensively as in such animated series as *Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Mobile Suit Gundam*, and *Macross*, and such films as *Phoenix 2772*, *Toward the Terra*, and *Lensman*.

A particular work's artistic style or place in animation history is often overlooked.

Aside from the review section and the chapters on television and genre, the book offers some additional features that are particularly welcome. Foremost is the foreword by Noboru Ishiguro, a director associated with such series as *Space Cruiser Yamato* and *Macross*. This gives readers a chance to hear a Japanese artist's appreciation of his American fans and tribute to

the American popular culture that nourished his own, as well as his assessment of his country's animation product.

There is also a detailed history of anime fandom in the U.S. from 1961 until 1992, compiled by Fred Patten, the book's chief editor and seminal figure in this history. In the back of the book, in addition to lists of anime web sites, fan clubs, magazines, and video distributors, there is an index of artistic personnel, so one can cross-check an artist's credits. A random check of several important names, however, revealed three artists (Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, Gisaburo Sugii, Shotaro Ishinomori) whose credits, as included in the review section, were incomplete; hopefully, this will be corrected in a future edition.

Sidestepping Sex

The book briefly addresses the issues of sex and violence, but only to defend anime from a bad reputation arising from *Legend of the Overfiend* (Urotsukidoji) and its ilk. It gently sidesteps the whole "tentacle porn" genre in a footnote:

"Perhaps in a future edition of this book, we'll treat *Urotsuki Doji* and its legions of drooling idiot imitators as a separate genre, but for now, if you'll pardon the expression, once you've seen one giant demonic phallus destroying Tokyo, you've seen them all." Even in the reviews of the X-rated titles (a rating imposed by the book's contributors and not by a ratings board), the reviewers avoid explicit discussion of the sexual content in the videos. I fully understand the authors' caution, but I think it would have been helpful to differentiate more clearly those titles with genuine erotic content from those with gratuitous sexual violence.

Despite the minor quibbles over genre and sex, the book stands out as an invaluable compendium of current information about legally available anime, with some very useful reviews and consumer guidance. Still, there remains a need for a detailed historical overview designed to include anime not released in the U.S., as well as a continuing critical study of

these films by commentators with a stronger grasp of American, Japanese and animation film history and aesthetics.

The reviews, in fact, constitute the one major expansion of the book's initial 1995 edition.

The Complete Anime Guide: Japanese Animation Film Directory & Resource Guide, Second Edition by Trish Ledoux and Doug Ranney, edited by Fred Patten. Issaquah, WA: Tiger Mountain Press, 1997. \$19.95; ISBN: 0-9649542-5-7

Brian Camp is Program Manager at CUNY-TV, the City University of New York cable TV station. He has written about Japanese animation for Outre Magazine and The Motion Picture Guide and has also written for Film Comment, Film Library Quarterly, Sightlines, The New York Daily News and Asian Cult Cinema.

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Manga into Anime

Two Approaches: *Sanctuary* and *Ghost in the Shell*

by Brian Camp

The relationship between manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation) is long and rich and deserving of more in-depth discussion than possible here. However, interested readers can take a crash course in the subject by reading the English-language editions of two popular manga series, *Sanctuary* and *Ghost in the Shell*. Then one can view the animated adaptations, both released on video in the U.S. in 1996. The two films represent the best examples of the opposite poles of manga/anime adaptation: *Sanctuary: The Movie* is scrupulously faithful to the original's story and visual style, while *Ghost in the Shell* offers one filmmaker's highly personal interpretation of another artist's distinctly quirky source material.

Sanctuary, a continuing series published by Viz Comics, written by Sho Fumimura and drawn by Ryoichi Ikegami (*Crying Freeman*), tells a story of two school buddies who enter parallel career tracks, one in politics and one in the Yakuza underworld. Their shared goal is to bring younger blood into the aging ruling establishments

of their respective institutions. In a tale riddled with violence, political intrigue, deception, and often brutal sexual exploits, the creators take powerful swipes at the domination of Japanese institutions by elderly men who will not make room for the younger generations. The artists' sleek, finely detailed, black-and-white illustrations and realistic backgrounds offer an authentic update of classic crime novel imagery with a touch of film noir.

The story line in *Sanctuary: The Movie* (Viz Video) comes from Volume 1 and the beginning of Volume 2 in Viz's series of bound volumes. Although their order is altered, most of the scenes in the film are taken directly from the comic book going so far as to repeat much of the same dialogue and many of the same compositions. The animation is somewhat limited but this enables more detailed artwork and realistic character design based closely on the designs in the comic.

The big difference between the two forms of *Sanctuary* is the animated version's use of color. The film eschews the black shadows, dark blue nighttime exteriors, and extreme camera angles normally associated with anime noir (e.g. Yoshiaki Kawajiri's *Wicked City*) and employs lots of sunny exteriors. Nighttime scenes are awash in brightly-lit neon while interiors are dominated by soft browns. Characters are dressed chiefly in light suits and pastel colors, recalling *Miami Vice* rather than *The Untouchables*. The color scheme transforms the dramat-



Hojo and Isihara, two characters in the *Sanctuary* comic book.

ic imagery of Ikegami's original illustrations into something more realistic and representative of contemporary Japan than most crime-themed anime. The visual approach closely recalls that of an earlier faithfully-adapted anime version of an Ikegami-drawn manga, *Crying Freeman*, which also told a violent crime story amidst sunny outdoor settings and bright colors.

Ghost in the Shell is the work of celebrated young writer/artist Masamune Shirow (*Appleseed*, *Dominion Tank Police*, *Black Magic M-66*) and is available in a glossy bound volume, containing 10 issues, from Dark Horse. A unique mix of free-wheeling humor, fast-paced violent action, and bursts of overwhelming scientific detail, *Ghost* follows the adventures of special agent Major Motoko Kusanagi and her colleagues from Section 9 of the Public Security Bureau in Newport City



From the animated film, *Ghost in the Shell*.



Sanctuary, the comic book.

in 2029. They track down computer criminals and breaches in national security. Robots and cyborgs are as plentiful in this near-future world as humans and occasionally display much the same sense of humor and capacity for feeling. Shirow mixes moments of grim seriousness and realistic drawing with comical cartoony asides. The women characters, including the almost completely cyborg Kusanagi, are generally gorgeous, sexy, and often scantily-clad.

Mamoru Oshii's feature-length animated adaptation (released by Manga Entertainment) derives its plot from those portions of the ten-part series relating to the elusive hacker known in the comic as "Puppeteer" and in the film as "Puppet Master." In both comic and film, the hacker turns out to be a computer-created entity, the result of a government project gone awry, that considers itself a sentient life form and seeks its own body. Unlike Shirow's work, Oshii's is dead serious from start to finish and endeavors to make this startling future world as realistic-looking, and sounding, as possible. The film's Kusanagi is virtually expressionless throughout and her voice is a steady monotone. More businesslike and no-nonsense than she was in the

comic, Kusanagi's frequent nudity is strictly functional, necessary for the performance of her duties, with absolutely no erotic overtones. The body she unveils is a "shell," a sophisticated product of the MegaTech Corporation.

Oshii takes the time to craft an elaborate cityscape of dazzling skyscrapers with elegant high-tech features which contrast with the shabbier sections of town, marked by outdoor market stalls, garbage-strewn canals, and abandoned buildings. Some of Shirow's individual panels do indeed provide the visual cues for the film's background designs. However, Oshii expands on them, devoting long segments to detailing the mood and ambiance of a city of such extremes, a preoccupation of Oshii's also evident in his earlier films, *Patlabor: Mobile Police 1* (1989) and *Patlabor: Mobile Police 2* (1993, both Manga Entertainment).

Whereas Shirow displays an obvious fetish for weaponry and new technology, seemingly delighted with the implications for humankind of such a future, Oshii's approach is more cautionary in tone and asks what defines our humanity in a world where a computer-created entity can have the self-awareness to demand a right to life. Shirow is more concerned with the scientific aspects of the Puppeteer's bid for life, while Oshii is concerned with the ethical and philosophical questions raised. As such, *Ghost* more closely resembles Oshii's work on the two *Patlabor* films, both of which dealt with



More *Ghost in the Shell* action.

construction technology going haywire during the 21st century redevelopment of Tokyo.

Sanctuary remains the more dramatic and cohesive manga, while *Ghost in the Shell*

remains the more visually stunning and rewarding film. The color scheme, aided by a warm and infectious jazz score, transforms the dramatic imagery of Ikegami's original illustrations into something more realistic and representative of contemporary Japan than most crime-themed anime. Shirow is preoccupied with science and technology and their comic, as well as dramatic possibilities, whereas, Oshii is more preoccupied with philosophy. While manga and anime are very closely related, film is a different medium with different attributes. It is interesting to watch how different filmmakers make a fusion of the two. Which aspects of the original do they see as most important and how does that manifest itself on the screen? It could be an almost endless case study.

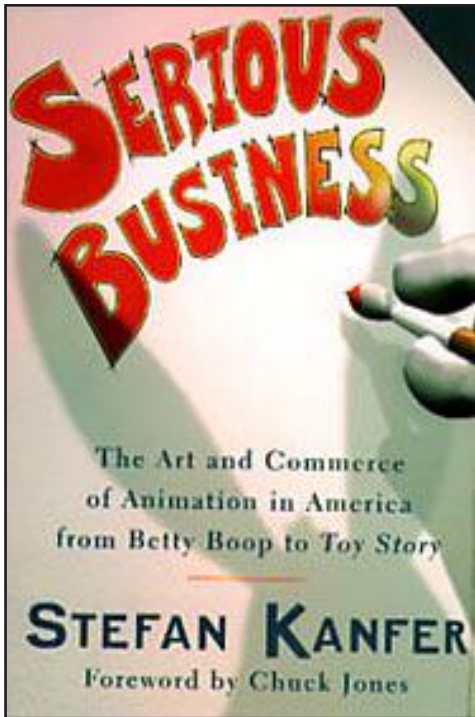


Sanctuary: The Movie

Brian Camp is Program Manager at CUNY-TV, the City University of New York cable TV station. He has written about Japanese animation for Outre Magazine and The Motion Picture Guide and has also written for Film Comment, Film Library Quarterly, Sightlines, The New York Daily News and Asian Cult Cinema.

Serious Business: Serious Book?

Book Review by Mark Kausler



Oh! My achin' eyeballs! Now, there's yet another new book on the animated cartoon, *Serious Business: The Art and Commerce of Animation in America From Betty Boop to Toy Story*, by Stefan Kanfer and published by Scribner. I think I'll put it on the shelf next to the spate of other recent "dubious achievements" spawned by the animation boom; *Enchanted Drawings*, *The Fifty Greatest Cartoons*, *Seven Minutes*, *Cartoon Monikers*, *Animating Culture* and *Walt Disney, The Dark Prince of Hollywood*. All of these books share common problems: they are poorly

researched, often paraphrased from seminal books on animation, they consistently misspell names, they mix-up film descriptions by often mis-matching titles and plots and the proper chronology of events is often disregarded. Worst of all, the books are often hatched from a premise that was not worth writing about in the first place, or paid for by big corporations as promotion devices.

The title *Serious Business* led me to believe the book might cover the business side of animation, history reflected through numbers, and include profit and loss statements, salary highs and lows for animators and other creative workers, and reports on profit participation by producers. I'd love to know if Leon Schlesinger or Fred Quimby got any kickbacks or percentages of their operating budgets, and how much! Instead we get a book that tries to squeeze the entire history of the animated cartoon into 235 pages, and yet falls far short of any real understanding of the medium. Being a friend of Chuck Jones, Kanfer makes sure that Chuck's favorite story about the inspiration behind Daffy Duck's voice (Leon Schlesinger's very pronounced lisp), gets printed not only on page 94,

but also on the inside flap of the dust jacket. Of course Chuck has already told the story in loving detail in *Chuck Amuck*, and it makes an amusing anecdote, however, existing recordings of Leon's voice (Schlesinger Christmas Party Reels, 1938-39, and *You Ought to Be in Pictures*, which Kanfer erroneously believes that Bob Clampett directed instead of Friz Freleng) indicate that if there is a lisp there, it is barely detectable. Keith Scott, linguist and voice performer whose excellent book on Jay Ward awaits publication, is my expert witness on this "lispng Leon" business. Keith has such a sensitive ear for human speech that he was able to figure out who did Screwly Squirrel's voice (Wally Maher) when no other animation scholar could crack the mystery. He too is unable to discern Leon's lisp from the existing sound recordings.

The title *Serious Business* led me to believe the book might cover the business side of animation.

Sloppy Research

Kanfer, because of obviously sloppy research, repeats and

perpetuates errors such as Leslie Cabarga's delusion about the lyrics that Louis Armstrong sings in Fleischer's *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You*. If you listen to the soundtrack, Louis clearly states: "You bought my wife a bottle of Coca-Cola, so you could play on her Victrola." Cabarga, in his book *The Fleischer Story*, quotes it as: "so you could play on her vago-la." Obviously this story appeals to prurient interest, but it's phony. If Kanfer had checked the cartoon, he wouldn't have repeated Cabarga's error. Kanfer loves to point out sexy gags wherever he can find them, and seems scandalized by so-called "racism" in American entertainment. Here, he belabors the obvious. The history of popular American entertainment is loaded with sexy jokes, minstrelsy and jokes at the enemy's expense during World Wars. These vintage jokes may only be fit for the memory hole, and too outrageous for today's delicate sensibilities, nevertheless they were told. They are part of American history. To cast aspersions and vilify the animated cartoons and their makers for being part of the humor of their times is short-sighted. Many of the films he talks about, such as *Der Fuehrer's Face* and *You're a Sap, Mr. Jap*, have been withdrawn from distribution for years, and studios often refuse access to these titles even to researchers. It seems to me that the end result of all this finger pointing about racism will be that these cartoons will be even more mercilessly censored and locked up like some vile pornography, when the carica-

tures in them were seldom intended to be mean to anyone; they were created to entertain an audience.

Kanfer not only errs in quoting sloppy authors, but he fails to understand chronology. On page 194, he quotes Freleng's disgust with network television, then accuses him of being "part of the problem." You see Friz is a dreaded Capitalist. He made pro-business films for the Sloane Foundation, apparently after Warner Bros. closed their animation department. If you look at the facts, *By Word of Mouse* was made in 1954, eight years *before* Warner's closed. Kanfer quotes Norman M. Klein (dubious achiever and author of *Seven Minutes*) that the sinister message here is about the "changing role of cartoons, from film toward more obviously consumer-driven television." Actually, The Sloane Foundation would put up more than just the cartoon's negative cost if their message about the American business system could be included in the story. Friz did not choose to do this; the deal was between Warner Bros. and Sloane. The statement Warners seems to be making here is "if above-the-line profits can be made, *make 'em!*"

Kanfer not only errs in quoting sloppy authors, but he fails to understand chronology.

When Did That Happen?

As further evidence of Kanfer's disregard for chronology, on page 115, he states that "Daffy Duck was the studio's (Leon

Schlesinger) answer to Woody Woodpecker." This simple sentence shows a regrettable lack of understanding. Daffy made his debut in *Porky's Duck Hunt* (1937), which Kanfer thinks (page 116) is Bugs Bunny's first cartoon. Woody didn't appear until 1940 in *Knock-Knock*. "Daffy was Leon's answer to Woody," sounds like some more of that "retroactive plagiarism" that Chuck Jones likes to talk about. Woody is more of an echo of the Crazy Rabbit that appeared in Ben Hardaway's *Porky's Hare Hunt* and *Hare-um Scare-um*. When Ben moved over to Lantz in 1940, he took the notion of a crazy character with the 'Ha-Ha-Ha-Haaaa-Ha!' laugh and made it a woodpecker instead of a rabbit. Mel Blanc supplied the laugh for both characters. To further damage his credibility, on page 117, Kanfer thinks that Bugs says "What's Up, Doc?" in *Porky's Hare Hunt* and that Avery directed it! He is also under the impression that the line "Of course you realize this means war!" became part of Bugs Bunny's vocabulary in later years, when in fact Ben Hardaway's Crazy Rabbit used the line in his first picture, *Porky's Hare Hunt* (1938)!

Let's see, what other Deviltry seems to affect Kanfer's book? Page 154: Art Babbitt's name was supposedly "expunged from the credits of *Snow White* and all the other films he had worked on, as well as any related printed materials..." Well, at last check, Art's name (spelled correctly, which Kanfer can't seem to do) is still on the credits of *Snow White*, and his name is still on all the studio

lists that name all of the animators on Disney cartoons. So, Walt's "order" must have been ignored. On page 189, he seems to think that Hanna-Barbera's system of "planned animation" used a dialog system that "ignored" consonants! A mouth system with only vowel sounds would have the character speaking with its mouth *open* all the time. The Hanna-Barbera mouth drawings might have been redundant, but they *did* include both opened and closed positions! On page 143, Kanfer has Dave Fleischer directing *Slay It With Flowers* at Paramount. Dave Fleischer produced *Slay It With Flowers* in 1944, at Columbia's Screen Gems cartoon studio, after the Fleischer Bros. studio was closed by Paramount. Bob Wickersham directed it for him. Kanfer also implies that Dave Fleischer continued to direct Popeye and Superman shorts during his involvement with *Fox and Crow*. Kanfer seems unaware of the history of Columbia's cartoon studio which was founded by Charles Mintz in 1929. It gets no mention at all until Frank Tashlin takes it over and that isn't until page 131.

The book's tone smacks more of *The National Enquirer* than *The Saturday Review*.

Then there's the "revisionist" spelling of proper names such as "Seamus" instead of Shamus Culhane, Bob "McKimpson" instead of McKimson, and Eddie "Seltzer" instead of... Well, you get the idea.

The Looking Glass is Dirty

Kanfer summarizes his book this way: "To watch these funny pictures...is actually to peer into a distorted looking glass that catches the light and gives back pictures of ourselves." Yet, when cartoonists really *do* give us a distorted picture of ourselves, Kanfer is uncomfortable. The book's tone smacks more of *The National Enquirer* than *The Saturday Review*. Kanfer incessantly quotes from *Walt Disney*, *The Dark Prince of Hollywood*, as if it was all true, instead of a collection of everybody's favorite 'Horrible Stories About Walt,' many of which are hearsay and unsubstantiated. He finds creeping capitalists and racists and makers of mediocrity behind every tree, but he reveals very little about the artists who created the films this book is supposedly about. He mainly quotes Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng; almost nobody else gets to speak. Because of his close alliance with Chuck Jones, history gets a lot of Jones-friendly interpretation. To dismiss Hanna and Barbera's entire *Tom and Jerry* series as "mediocrity," seems to serve Jones very well. After all, the failure of Chuck's version of Tom and Jerry is justified, the characters he had to work with were never that good. He makes sure that Chuck gets full credit for *Hell Bent For Election* and *The Dover Boys*. John Hubley and Bobe Cannon are never mentioned. Chuck also gets the credit for the dubious achievement of creating the market for "re-drawn and painted cels" in the 1970s. This "market" was really developed jointly by Disney, Lantz, Hanna and

Barbera, Friz Freleng, Shamus Culhane and Chuck Jones as a way of cashing in on the animation art boom that occurred in the 1980's.

Chuck doesn't like animation historians very much. In his new book he likens them to "hemstitchers." If great historians of the animated cartoon like Mike Barrier, Leonard Maltin, Jerry Beck, John Canemaker, Keith Scott, Milton Gray and Will Friedwald are hemstitchers, then they have sewn beautiful garments that flatter their subjects. Kanfer and his ilk mainly sew smothering patchwork blankets that cover their subject without revealing it.

Serious Business: The Art and Commerce of Animation in America from Betty Boop to Toy Story. by Stefan Kanfer. New York: Scribner, 1997. 256 pages, illustrated. Trade paperback, \$27.95; ISBN: 0-684-80079-9.

Mark Kausler is an animator who has been working in the industry for 25 years. He is currently working at Walt Disney Feature Animation on Fantasia 2000.

Anything But A Hash Up: Animation:Master Version 5

by Tim Elston

In 1986, I was reading the classifieds in the back of a computer magazine and was attracted to an ad with big bold letters promising "Disney Animation" on a computer. Wow! That took me back to a conversation I had in 1979 with coworkers at Ruby-Spears about the possibilities of doing animation on a computer and what that could mean to a couple of guys without the capital to purchase a few supercomputers. The program in the ad, which I pur-

chased, was Animation:Apprentice, the start of a long history of products from Hash Inc. After Animation:Apprentice came Animation:Journeyman and Animation:Master.

This month Hash Inc. debuts Animation:Master version 5. A long, long way from Animation:Apprentice, version 5 is a matured and accessible program that covers the full spectrum of tools for the beginner to the experienced computer animator. Using the Microsoft Foundation Class libraries, the interface has everything you need available at the click of a mouse. All of the features and keyboard equivalents are customizable to fit the style of the individual animator. There are also extensive tutorials to help the user on working the features. Macmillan's New Riders computer book division is also close to releasing the advanced *Power User's Guide to Version 5*.

New Modeling Tools

If you're a 3D artist and haven't worked with splines before, you're in for a treat. Splines allow an animator/modeler to jump in with a 'hands on' feeling for the modeling. I like to imagine splines as rubber bands with thumb tacks at each end. Add a thumb tack (control point) in the middle of a line and you can simply create a curve. Lay down a mesh of splines and you can create beautiful organic shapes. As another example, imagine poly-

gon-based objects that are made of straight match sticks which join at the ends (think of a geodesic dome made up of tiny triangles). Splines don't think of these lines as match sticks but rather as pipe cleaners. You can attach pipe cleaners at each end or in the middle but you can also bend them to get smooth curves.

For every pixel in the average frame there are millions of calculations.

Over the last year several articles in *Computer Graphics World* and *3D Design* have focused on the work done for Marvel 2099 by Jeff Bunker and the Avalanche group in Salt Lake City using the Animation:Master program. Whereas most polygon-based human forms are limited by the process of being scanned from physically sculpted models, the characters done by Jeff and his staff have amazing personality and a look that makes you feel their presence. Best of all there are no facets so the characters are easy to animate and only take about 10% of the disc space required for a polygon object with the same apparent resolution. Plus, they are modeled by hand (incredible!). The characters have to be seen to be believed.

Those of you that have used Animation:Master before and are knowledgeable of splines will be happy to know about 'hooks.' Hooks allow a modeler to attach, for exam-



A female model generated in Hash Animation:Master.

ple, a vertical spline between two other vertical splines to a horizontal spline without needing to carry the spline beyond. This works very well when changing modeling resolutions, like from a face which has a high spline/patch density to the rest of the head which usually has a low spline/patch density.

The character is now modeled and organized differently and more simply than before. If you have worked with Hash Inc.'s software, you know that building a character used to be a process of endless links of segment directories and their sub-directories. Then you would have to skin all of the segments to make one figure (it was like building a car). It was a complex way of handling a complex problem. As Hash Inc.'s development team has grown and understood the subtlety of the software, they have made the program more intelligent to allow the artist to concentrate on the creative modeling and animation process. The character is built as one segment (its like buying a car) and the movement of arms, legs, head, neck, and so on is handled through 'bones.' Since spline patches are lower density than polygons, a modeler can group the spline/control points of the head to make a bone that forms a "jaw." Then dialogue can be animated and controlled frame by frame with a mouse.

Although motion capture input is available, hand animating a figure or group of figures in this software can be easy and fun to do.

Motion and Rendering Additions
Although motion capture input is available, hand animating a figure or group of figures in this software



From *The Sound Experience*, an animation project done for Apple Computer and Bose Sound. Design and animation by Tim Elston.

can be easy and fun to do. Animation:Master allows the animator to express gestures, like facial expressions, expressive poses, pratfalls and takes, with subtle or dynamic timing. The inverse kinematics, or the process that allows one to move a hand and have the arm follow where one pulls the hand, can be set up to allow one to lock the character's feet to the floor. Or one can attach an object to a hand, then place the object on a table, for instance, and have the hand leave without doing the customary scene cut. Also any character with the same number and name of body parts as another can use actions from that character as a reusable motion library.

Any spline in a scene can become a motion path. Imagine a scene of the Harlem Globetrotters doing their basketball wizardry where one of the players is passing a ball down one arm, behind his neck and to the other arm. The arms tilt in reverse as the ball reaches the end of the arm and slows down. The animator can attach the ball to the spline that passes through the arms and as the arms move the ball will stay attached to that spline. Put a rotation on the ball with stride length, add slow in and slow out and the ball will roll across the arms as they teeter totter.

Rendering is now processed

through a hybrid renderer. To understand all of the benefits of this new feature, we must first explore how a computer renders an image by discussing color, light and the camera. With computers and digital filmmaking, color is reduced to tiny pixels (PICTure Elements) that have their color expressed in numbers. You might say that working with a brush and paints is analog because the artist can mix dabs of paint from many tubes to get any color he wants. The way I use color digitally is by using RGB values usually at 24 bit which gives me a palette of 16.7 million discreet colors. A light source has a numeric value for color, intensity and location. An object in a scene has numeric values of color and specularity (shininess plus jocularity). Other aspects that are considered are where and what the surface is, the location of the object, and whether or not it casts shadows or is transparent. There is also the camera. Its position plus its focal length and atmospheric qualities are all added up into the digital soup. In a typical size picture for video there are 640x480 pixels. For film, resolution is often above 2000 pixels horizontally. For every pixel in the average frame there are millions of calculations. Raytracing is the most expensive time-wise because it does the most calculations. It casts a ray of light out from the light source through every pixel in the screen to see if there is an object there and



From *Spartacus*, a project by Tim Elston for Apple Computer.

what color it is etc. Then it reads that light ray as it bounces back into the camera.

Animation:Master version 5 is able to pick dynamically the best type of renderer per pixel on the fly. Some areas of the frame might have shadows that need to be ray-traced but other areas without reflections or shadows can be rendered using a quicker process. Production teams can therefore, finish animation frames in the quickest time possible. The renderer has been extensively reworked and the render times are at least 200-300% quicker than before. In addition to speeding up the process, the Hash programmers have also managed to improve the image quality by 32 times when compared to version 4 of Animation:Master.



Tim Elston's 3D translation of a clown character originally designed in 2D by Lin Larsen.

But Wait! There's More

The Director module has always been one of Hash Inc's strong points. Actors, props, lights and cameras can be set up in the scene to follow motion paths with channels. Lights and cameras are also completely controllable allowing the director to set the mood with the type of light, color, camera angle, and lens aperture he chooses. Like action, objects, cameras and lights can be added with seven different types of constraints.

Rotoscoping can be done at the level of modeling, action, or final compositing. In Sculpture mode, the Rotoscope is an image imported into the program as a template. Using one image from the side and one from the front the artist can build an object accurately from real life or from artwork. In Action mode, a series of images in sequential order, like Muybridge, can be used as a template to animate. In the Director module, a Rotoscope can be a compositing element for final output.

As in all computer animation, it is best to have a computer that is the highest level Pentium or Pentium II one can get or an Alpha NT machine. 32 MB of RAM is necessary and at least 64 MB or more is recommended. Martin Hash and company believe that people wanting to animate with good tools should have access to good tools. The version 5 of Animation:Master is therefore available on Windows 95/NT, the Power Mac, and the Alpha NT platforms at an accessible price. You can get all of the features described here for \$199.00. An upgrade version with more features, like 'Multiplane,' a compositing feature, 'Lip-synch,' a utility to help animate dialog, and 'NetRender' for rendering over a computer network, is available for under \$700.

Most people would think that the \$199.00 price makes this program a cheap competitor to the likes of Kinetix's 3D Studio Max \$3,000 package or Microsoft's \$13,000 Softimage. However in comparison, the power of what you get for your \$200 is truly amazing and in the hands of a true animation master can make dreams come true.

Glossary

Although I have tried to explain things as thoroughly as possible, this



"Phil," a character designed in 2D by Lin Larsen and translated into 3D by Tim Elston.

is a highly technical field. For those readers who are from a traditional background and would like to understand more, I have included a small glossary. If you have more questions, please email me at time@plasmadyne.com.

Apparent Resolution - In complex characters, the level of detail of a character. As a general rule of thumb, a character modeled in a polygon-based program has a file size 40 times the size of a Hash spline-based character.

Bones - A bone is made by assigning animation control to a part of a character created in Animation:Master. A skeleton of 'bones,' not unlike our own, makes up the 'handles' that allow one to grab and move the computer character.

Channel - A window that describes the changes in an object's movement (y axis) over time (x axis). It allows the artist to visualize and tweak motion subtly.

Constraints - A way of putting motion limits on an object. For

example, a human's knee or elbow doesn't normally bend backwards. In Animation:Master there are seven types of constraints: Aim At, Kinematics, Path, Translate To, Orient Like, Aim Roll At, Spherical Limits.

Control Points - Attachment points on a spline allowing the connection of other splines' control points. It is like spline Velcro!

Hooks - Splines are designed to loop around an object or to pass from one end of the object to the other. But in the case of a head where there is a lot of detail on the face and not as much on the back of the head, it allows the modeler to redistribute the detail from the face where it is needed to the rest of the head by being able to end the spline without creating other problems. This was not possible before Version 5.

Inverse Kinematics - Kinematics is a chain of parts (for example, upper arm + forearm + hand + finger) that move together because they're connected. Inverse means you move it from the end of the chain instead of the beginning. For example, it allows you to grab the tip of a figure's finger and move the whole arm.



From *The Sound Experience*, an animation project done for Apple Computer and Bose Sound. Design and animation by Tim Elston.

Motion Capture - The process of hooking up computer sensors to an actor's body to track the movement of the actor. The motion capture files can then be used to animate computer generated figures.

Motion Library - Files describing movement that can be applied to different computer-animated objects.

Motion Path - A spline path in a computer scene that allows the animator to attach an object to move along.

Pixel - A PICture Element. Television screens are made up of pixels. If you look very close at your television screen you can see the individual squares that make up the pattern of an image.

Polygon - An object made up of straight sides (vertices). More detail and curvature can be created by making the vertices smaller or by using rendering tricks to smooth them.

Raytracer - A highly accurate mathematical process of shading an image where every pixel has a light ray shot through it from the light source which contacts any object in that pixel and then records it back to the camera.

Render - The computer process of generating an image.

RGB - Light is made of three primary colors, Red, Green and Blue (R-G-B). Computer colors used for video are usually expressed in numbers for each primary color. In 24 bit color each R-G-B value has a number between 0 (no light value) and 255 (full light value). Black is expressed as 0 ,0 ,0. Pure white is expressed as 255, 255, 255. A pure red would

be expressed as 255,0,0. A value of orange could be 128, 128, 0.

Rotoscope - An image or sequence of images used as templates in Animation:Master.

Scan - In 3D, the process of using a device to accurately measure the surfaces of an object for use in a computer environment.

Spline - An infinitely elastic building element of spline modelers. In the hands of the inexperienced it can end up looking like a plate of spaghetti.

Stride Length - The ability of measuring the length of a stride on the walk cycle of a computer character so that when the character is placed on a motion path, the legs move proportionally and don't skate across the ground. It can also be applied to round objects such as car wheels.

Tim Elston is a 3D modeler/animator based in Grass Valley, California. He has been a professional animator for 20 years, and spent 10 years in the animation industry in Los Angeles before learning the digital side of animation. His credits include work for Computoons, 3DO and The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. He is now working on a virtual museum project for The Museum of Ancient and Modern Art, and has several other projects in development.

Archive Profile: The John Canemaker Animation Collection at NYU

by John Canemaker

In 1988, I signed a formal agreement with New York University to house fifteen years worth of my animation research materials. On October 5, 1989, The John Canemaker Animation Collection opened to animation history scholars and students in a special collection known as the Fales Library, which is located within the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at NYU in New York City.



John Canemaker.

My donation consisted of materials and data I had gathered through the years preparing and writing on animation art, artists and techniques in periodical articles, film reviews, and books, such as *The Animated Raggedy Ann & Andy* (1977), *Treasures of Disney Animation Art* (1982), *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art* (1987). Included

were dozens of files containing interview transcripts, correspondence, news clippings and publicity regarding such diverse animators as Tex Avery, Alexander Alexeieff, Claire Parker, Oskar Fischinger, Chuck Jones, Otto Messmer, Winsor McCay, Walt Disney, Kathy Rose, Art Babbitt, Walter Lantz, John Halas, Joy Batchelor, Shamus Culhane, Tissa David, Caroline Leaf, Richard Williams, George Griffin, Suzan Pitt, Michael Sporn, Dennis Pies, Len Lye, and George Dunning, I. Klein, Bruno Bozzetto, Jules Engel, as well as others.

Also included were fifty books, several of them out-of-print, over 200 periodicals, and a collection of original animation art, posters, 53 flip books, as well as production folders on my own animation film projects, both independently produced (i.e., *Confessions Of A Star Dreamer*, *Bottom's Dream*, etc.) and commercially sponsored (i.e., *John Lennon Sketchbook*, Yoko Ono Prod.; *You Don't Have To Die*, HBO, Academy Award winning documentary animation sequences; *The World According To Garp*, Warner Bros.)

I also donated fourteen videotapes and over 100 audio tapes

containing interviews with artists such as J. R. Bray, Shamus Culhane, Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, Art Babbitt, Otto Messmer, Terry Gilliam, and Len Lye, among others. This audio/visual material is housed in the Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media which is also part of the Bobst Library.

In 1988, I signed a formal agreement with New York University to house fifteen years worth of my animation research materials.

A Growing Resource

The Canemaker Animation Collection is a "living archive" in that I continue to contribute materials as I complete book and periodical projects and animated films. For example, in 1993 I donated research and interviews for a March/April 1993 *Print* magazine article I wrote on John Hubley's unfinished animated feature *Finian's Rainbow*. Other items I have donated include a complete publicity packet and magazine articles on Douglas Leigh, Broadway's electric sign "king," and publicity, production notes and interview transcripts with animators of Disney's *Aladdin*

for my essay that appeared in Sotheby's 10/9/93 animation art auction catalogue.

In 1995, I added to the Collection a file of production information on the CBS-TV Peabody Award-winning documentary, *Break The Silence: Kids Against Child Abuse*, for which I designed and directed animation sequences; the original unedited manuscript and documentation for my book *Felix - The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat* (Pantheon, 1991); a file of data regarding an exhibit I curated and wrote the catalog essay for, *Vladimir Tytla: Master Animator*, at the Katonah Museum of Art (September through December,

The Canemaker Animation Collection is a "living archive" in that I continue to contribute materials as I complete book and periodical projects and animated films.

1994).

Again in 1996, I donated a large number of files on my recent books *Tex Avery: The MGM Years* (Turner, 1996) and *Before The Animation Begins: The Art and Lives of Disney Inspirational Sketch Artists* (Hyperion, 1996). Files include information on Albert Hurtor, Ferdinand Horvath, Gustaf Tenggren, James Bodrero, Kay Nielsen, Joe Grant, Tyrus Wong, Sylvia Moberly-Holland, Mary and Lee Blair, Eyvind Earle, Bianca Majolie, Ken Anderson, David Hall, as well as others, and interviews with actors and the director of the live-action

version of *101 Dalmatians*, used for my 11/24/96 *New York Times* article on the film.

Unusual items in the Canemaker Collection include a copy of Richard Williams' notebook on Art Babbitt's legendary 1973 London animation workshops; years of correspondence between myself and Disney master animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, and letters between myself and Academy Award-winning Danish animator Borge Ring, a knowledgeable fan and scholar of American character animation; transcripts of Disney director David Hand's 1946 animation lectures when he was starting a studio in England; a 1941 unpublished biography of Winsor McCay; Robin Allan's University of Exeter 1993 thesis *Walt Disney and Europe*; four large files of data on Mary and Lee Blair, including personal correspondence, tax forms, their 1941 South American itinerary and research for Disney's *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* as well as early publicity and interviews.

For An Appointment...

This rich resource of documents, graphic materials and information for the study of international animation art and artists is available to scholars visiting New York City by phoning or writing for an appointment:

Mr. Marvin J. Taylor
Fales Librarian
Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
New York University
70 Washington Square South
New York, N.Y. 10012-1091
phone: (212) 998-2596

It was my hope in establishing this unique collection, and now putting information about it on the web, that I could preserve this hard-won information and share my love and enthusiasm of animation to others around the world.

John Canemaker is a filmmaker and animation historian. He heads the animation program at New York University and his books include Before Animation Begins: The Art and Lives of Disney Inspirational Sketch Artists (Hyperion), Tex Avery: The MGM Years (Turner), and Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat (Da Capo).

Animation World Network has published the complete 21-page Finding Aid of Documentary and Graphic Materials in the John Canemaker Collection at NYU, within the Vault Archive section of AWN.

See also an article about John Canemaker in the December 1996 issue of *Animation World Magazine*:
<http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.9/articles/lyons1.9.html>



NEWS

July 1997 News

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

People

Hollywood Shuffle

Suzan Pitt will join the full-time faculty of **Ringling School Of Art & Design** in the fall, relocating to Florida from New York, where she has been a director with Ink Tank.

... **Walt Disney Television International's** Asia Pacific division has created the new position of vice president and managing director of broadcasting, naming former Carlton Communications head of operations **Robin Paxton** to the post in Hong Kong. ...

James Green left his post at Buena Vista in Japan, to relocate to San Francisco as head of international marketing for **Pixar**. ...

Also making a move from Disney to Pixar is **Sarah McArthur**, who exits as vice president of production at Walt Disney Feature Animation to assume the same position at Pixar. ...

ILM has named **Kevin Townsend** to the new position of vice president and general manager, and promoted **Marcie Malooly** and **John Denis** to executive producers in the San Francisco and Los Angeles production facilities, respectively. ...

Klasky Csupo promoted Laslo Nosek to vice president and director of creative services, a role in which he will oversee artistic development of all the studio's projects. ... **Susanne Murdoh**

has been named sales manager for **Manhattan Transfer**. ...

Walt Disney TV International appointed **Simon Kenny** and **Keith Legoy** senior vice presidents and managing directors for Latin America and Europe, respectively. ...

Film Roman executive vice president **Bill Schultz**, will be leaving his post at the end of the month, after which he will continue to consult part time for the company. Schultz, who was second in charge under CEO Phil Roman, has been with Film Roman for eight years. ...

Digital Domain has recruited **Edward Kummer** away from his post as senior manager of digital production for the animation department at Walt Disney Studios, to take on the position of vice president of digital operations for the Venice, California effects house. He replaces Ruth Scovill, who recently left Digital Domain and headed over to DreamWorks. ...

Klasky Csupo has named **Debbe Goldstein** to the new position of director of recruitment. Goldstein joins Klasky Csupo from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena where she was assistant director of admissions. ... **Los Angeles-based** video game publisher **Activision** has assigned **Robert Morgado**, former Warner Music Group CEO, to their board of directors. ... **Rhythm & Hues** has signed two new directors for

exclusive commercial representation, **Gary Gutierrez**, formerly of Complete Pandemonium and **Richard Taylor**, formerly of The Front, Duck Soup's live-action/new media arm. ... **Curious Pictures** has signed animator/director **Chel White** for commercial representation. White, who is known in the animation community for his film *Choreography for the Copy Machine* (*Photocopy Cha Cha*), will remain based in his Portland, Oregon studio. ... **Klasky Csupo Commercials** has signed three new directors for exclusive commercial representation, Vancouver independent and *Lupo the Butcher* creator Danny Antonucci, New York independent **George Griffin**, and CGI specialist **Miles Flanagan**. ... **Gil Gagnon** has been promoted to vp of production at **Cinesite**, where he has worked since 1992, most recent-



Chel White has joined Curious Pictures.



Animator and children's book author
Kelly Asbury

ly as production manager. . . .

Anne Allen McGrath has been named head of publishing efforts for **Dreamworks** consumer products division, a role in which she will oversee development of publishing programs based on films such as the animated feature *Prince of Egypt*. McGrath formerly held a similar position at Disney.

. . . .

DreamWorks Animation Appoints Ann Daly. Former Walt Disney Company executive and President, Domestic Home Video, Buena Vista Home Video, Inc., Ann Daly has been named head of DreamWorks SKG's Feature Animation division. Daly will share this responsibility with Ron Rocha. During her time at Walt Disney, Daly was a video industry pioneer, starting in 1994 by initiating high-quality, family-oriented films produced exclusively for video. Among others, the animated *Aladdin* sequels *The Return of Jafar* and *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* were produced under her supervision as she was responsible for all marketing, sales, distribution, production and all areas of the company's operations.

"Ann, one of the top women executives in the entertainment industry, has been responsible for developing some of the most innovative and dynamic marketing concepts in the video business...During our years together at Disney, she was unquestionably among the most talented and creative executives I had the pleasure of working with," stated Jeffrey Katzenberg. Prior to 1992 when she was named President, Daly was Senior Vice President, Marketing, of the division. She was employed by Disney for 14 years.

DreamWorks Animator Kelly Asbury Publishes Book Series.

DreamWorks animation director Kelly Asbury is launching his first series of children's books through Henry Holt & Co. publishers. The series includes three illustrated titles: *Rusty's Red Vacation*, *Bonnie's Blue House*, and *Yolanda's Yellow School*, which he hopes will expand into a rainbow of books including orange, green and purple. After trying for 14 years to get the books published, Asbury said that his opportunity arose when he met children's book illustrator and *James and the Giant Peach* animated feature film concept artist Lane Smith (*The Stinky Cheese Man*), who "really liked the books and helped me pave the way to publishers in New York." Storyopolis, a bookstore in West Hollywood, Los Angeles, hosted a reading of the books by actress Jennifer Tilly on May 31, and will offer a limited edition of lithographs from the book (call 1-800-95-TALES for information). Asbury was co-head of story on DreamWorks' *Prince of Egypt* and is currently directing animation on DreamWorks' fea-

ture adaptation of William Steig's children's book, *Shrek*.

Industry Mourns Death Of Phyllis Craig.

The animation community lost a true friend in May. Phyllis Craig, a 45 year animation veteran, passed away over the weekend following a short and unexpected hospital stay. Please visit the tribute to Phyllis in this issue, featuring photos, newspaper clippings and personal memories from Phyllis' friends and business associates.

Business

Warner Digital Closing Doors.

After several weeks of industry predictions, Warner Bros. has officially announced that their one year old digital production studio, Warner Digital, will be closing its doors in August. The studio's approximately 150 employees were informed in a meeting that they will all be dismissed by July 31. Just over two months ago, Warner Digital's senior vice president Tim Sarnoff left the studio to take on an upper level post at Sony Pictures ImageWorks. Sources inside Warner Digital speculate that the studio's staffers will likely find work at various digital effects studios, such as Lucas Arts, VIFX, Disney and DreamQuest among others.

Iris & Cinevox Join. Nicols Steil, CEO of Iris Productions in Luxembourg, has taken on additional responsibilities as director of the animation branch of Cinevox, in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany. Iris and Cinevox will now be co-producing several feature and television projects together, including *The Magic Forest*, a one-hour feature which just started production. The partners say they are

actively seeking series and feature projects which have a budget under \$10 million. Michel Ocelots forthcoming feature, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* which has been in production for several years, is now being produced by Iris Productions and is scheduled for a release at Cannes 1998.

Metatools-Fractal Merger Complete.

It was announced that the merger of graphics software companies MetaTools, Inc. (Nasdaq: MTLT) and Fractal Design Corporation (Nasdaq: FRAC) is effective with the naming of the combined company, MetaCreations Corporation (Nasdaq: MCRE). The company will have its headquarters in Carpinteria, California, while maintaining offices in Scotts Valley, California, Princeton, New Jersey, Dublin and Paris.

Atlantis' High-Calibre Investment.

Atlantis Communications has purchased a 50% equity stake in Toronto-based animation and special effects company, Calibre Digital Pictures. The deal leaves Atlantis the option to acquire the remaining half of the company, which currently employs 25 people with annual sales near \$4 million. Ten-year-old Calibre is comprised of two divisions: the Digital Effects Group and the Character Animation Group. "We intend that Calibre will grow as it begins to create proprietary animation," said Atlantis' CEO Michael MacMillan "The acquisition of Calibre is consistent with our intent to grow our overall business." The two companies have worked together before on effects for several live action television projects, including CG animation for Warner

Bros.' animated series *Beetlejuice*.

Pixibox Expands All The Way To China.

Anne Collet, Managing Director of Pixibox Studios in Paris, has just entered into a joint venture with Steven Ching, President of Animation Services Group in Hong Kong. Pixibox Studios and Animation Services Group will be doubling their production capacity and will have the ability to handle the service production on 20 half hour episodes per month. Furthermore, the Hong Kong studio will be fully equipped with the Pegs system. This agreement will be effective as of September 1, 1997 and will create the largest animation studio in the world.

Disney Hits a Legal Sandtrap.

What's in a name? A lot, apparently. The Walt Disney Company is facing a lawsuit filed by Karsten Manufacturing Co, a sporting goods manufacturer, accusing them of violating a trademark on a particular line of golf clubs. Karsten has held a registered trademark on the PING line of golf clubs since 1959. Meanwhile, Disney has assigned the name of "Ping" to a character in the summer 1998 animated feature film *Mulan*. Karsten, which produces a related line of PING merchandise, requests that Disney be barred from using the name "Ping", and forced to recall any existing products using the name, as well as pay "unspecified" damages.

Viacom Opens First Retail Store.

Media conglomerate Viacom Inc. opened its first Viacom Entertainment Store in May. Located on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, the 30,000 square foot facility will offer mer-

chandise from the bevy of Viacom-owned subsidiaries, including Nickelodeon and MTV. This is a long overdue move for Viacom to enter aggressively into the consumer products/licensing marketplace, alongside 429 Disney stores and 161 Warner Bros. stores to compete for consumer dollars. This new, exclusive and secure "shelf space" is sure to increase the development and manufacture of merchandise based on properties such as the hugely popular *Rugrats* and *Beavis & Butt-head*. An estimated five Viacom stores, including Nickelodeon-themed boutiques set in shopping malls, will open in other cities by 1998. Locations in New York, San Francisco and Las Vegas are being considered for additional stores. Viacom also owns the huge international chain of 5,000 Blockbuster Video and Music stores, which they initially considered using to launch their entry into entertainment retailing. However, instead they have boldly opted for this new chain. So. . . the next time you run out of Beavis & Butt-head's "Buttwipe" toilet paper, you know where to go!

Films

Petrov Animating IMAX Format Film.

Master Russian animator Alexander Petrov is working in Montreal on a 20 minute animated film in 70mm format, through Pascal Blais Productions. A Canadian, Japanese and Russian co-production, the film is being financed 95% by private investments from Canada, and in part by NHK, the largest TV network in Japan. The film is an adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, a project

that Petrov has wanted to do for years. Using his signature paint on glass technique, Petrov is working on a custom-built animation stand for the 70mm format, which features 6 multi-planes of glass, a motion control system, and a simultaneous digital recording system for testing. Until now, no animation stand had existed in this format. *The Old Man and the Sea* is scheduled for completion by the end of 1998. It will be sold individually to some of the 140 IMAX theaters which exist around the world where it will be packaged with a documentary on Ernest Hemingway. The release date will coincide with the 100 year anniversary of the author's birth.

CGI Feature Under The Rainbow.

Phoenix-based Rainbow Studios is currently developing a fully computer generated feature film with a working title of *Deadly Tide*. Two years of work and \$2 million have already been invested in the project, which as of yet has no set distributor, though rights to several international territories have already been pre-sold. Electronics company Pioneer has invested one-third of the production funding, while additional investors are being sought. Talents attached to the project include digital effects supervisor Ray McIntyre of Pixel Magic, director Tony Stutterheim and animator Bruce Hall of TRG3. William Morris Agency is currently casting voices for the film, which Rainbow is planning for an early 1999 release.

Alterian's Digital Effects.

Monrovia, California-based Alterian Studios, a supplier of animatronics, makeup and miniatures for feature films, has recently com-

pleted special effects work on several feature films through their new digital effects department headed by Elliot Worman. Films with a U.S. release date of June and July featuring Alterian's handiwork include: MGM/UAs *Warriors of Virtue* and Warner Bros.' *Batman and Robin*, and *Contact*.

Buzzco's Knitwitted Short.

New York-based Buzzco Associates, who recently took home an award at Annecy for their educational production *Talking About Sex: A Guide for Families*, is working on a new 11 minute short film called *Knitwits*. The film, which revolves around six women in a knitting store, was animated on paper, scanned into a computer, colored using Animation Stand and edited using Adobe Premiere software. The next step is to transfer the animation from the computer to film, a process for which the film's directors, Candy Kugel and Vince Cafarelli, are seeking additional funding. "We discovered, to our horror," said Kugel, "that we need between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to get it on film and finish the track." Kugel adds that they are open to co-productions and gen-



Medialab's Johnny Chimes character for NBC.

eral suggestions. Their e-mail address is: Buzzco@aol.com

Television

Medialab Animates NBC

Peacock. Real time performance animation made its way onto prime time network television in June, in the form of Johnny Chimes, a new spokesperson, er, spokes-peacock created for NBC by Medialab Studio L.A., a recently-opened affiliate of the French company Medialab. Based on NBC's classic colored peacock logo, the animated character will be used in interstitials and promos announcing the network's lineup.

MTV Animation Wants Your

Sushi. MTV Animation is looking for funny animated pieces to include in *Cartoon Sushi*, a new episodic prime time series which will be similar to the variety show format of *Liquid Television*, a cutting edge animation show which aired on MTV in the early 90's. *Sushi*, however, will not be a weekly show but a periodic half-hour program run on MTV — producers hope to come out with 8-12 episodes per year. The first installment is set to air on MTV U.S. on July 17 (10:30 p.m. ET), and will premiere an original opening sequence and promo bumpers animated by Danny Antonucci (of *Lupo the Butcher* fame). Producer Nick Litwinko says that each episode will be roughly 75% acquisitions and 25% commissions of original projects. Expect to see animation from the likes of John Dilworth, Webster Colcord, AMPnyc, and Malofilm, as well as students and other independent filmmakers. For information about submitting or pitching films for the show, email cartnsushi@aol.com

Ellipse & Trickompany Partner.

Hamburg-based Trickcompany and Paris-based Ellipse Programme have formed a joint venture to co-produce animated television series. Feature films will play a role in the future. For now, Trickcompany will produce and finance roughly one-third of Ellipse's animated series *Pirate Family* and Ellipse will take over about one-third of Trickcompany's *Nick & Perry - Alien Dogs*. Both projects have a commitment of 26 half-hour episodes and a budget of \$7.6 million. This venture will help both companies expand into the international arena and reduce the strain of finding funding.

Teletoon Added To Lyonnaise Cable. Teletoon, the French animation cable channel which launched in December 1996, has signed an agreement with French cable operator Lyonnaise Cable. Starting on June 2, Teletoon, which airs from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (10:30 p.m. Saturdays), added 350,000 homes to their subscriber base. Teletoon's current lineup includes programs such as *Transylvania Pet Shop*, *Gadget Boy*, *Nighthood*, *Noddy*, and *Little Bear*, a substantial block of which is produced by several of the network's investors, such as TF1, France 3, M6 and France 2.

Ch 4 Commissions Animation Variety Show. Illuminations Television is currently producing a new series for Channel 4. The late night series, initially 5 x 30 episodes, will feature a tremendous mix of animated programming. From short films to new features, commercials and promos the series will cover traditional animation to 3D as it presents a wide array of animated programming.

Though a working title and series producer is yet to be finalized, the team will include John Wyver (Illuminations Chairman and co-founder as well as animation feature producer, including *Ghosts in the Machine*), Keith Griffiths (animation producer), Irene Kotlarz (former director of the Cardiff International Animation Festival, now LA-based writer, producer), and Clare Wilford (animation publicist and writer). "We envisage a series that is fun, young, contemporary, accessible and exciting - and yet under-pinned by a deep understanding and love of the principles and diverse practices of animation. Channel 4 has been of inestimable importance to the development of British animation in the past 15 years," said Wyver. A web site to complement the series is also in the works.

Archibald The Koala's A Hit. Hit Entertainment (UK) has invested in a co-production with Millimages (France) to produce 52 episodes of *The Adventures of Archibald the Koala*, a 2D animated series based on a popular series of children's books by the French artist Paul Cox. The first group of 13 half-hours will be completed in June of 1998, through Millimages' two production facilities in Kiev, Ukraine and Bucharest, Bulgaria. The deal was signed at MIFA in Annecy in May, following discussions that began at MIP in April.

Canal + Animates Cyber Channel. France's largest pay television network, Canal + has expanded the content of its programming on C: The Cyber Channel (C:), a TV and Internet service focusing on new technology. On the one-year anniversary of the channel in April, program-

ming time was increased by one hour to include several series about computer animation, science fiction and manga (Japanese animation, anime), in addition to their regular programs about computers, video games and the Internet. The line-up includes *Les Chroniques de la Guerre de Lodoss*, a manga series which has never before been shown in France. Before the end of the year, C: will also begin offering high-speed Internet access via satellite, which will offer subscribers a reduction in the current astronomical telephone modem connection rates in Europe. This service will include C: Internet broadcast programming such as multiplayer games and interactive multimedia magazines. C: is currently available to CanalSatellite subscribers in France and Spain, and will soon become available in Germany and Sweden.

Monkey Love In Locomotion. Los Angeles-based independent animation producer Jim Keeshen has sold his short animated film, *Monkey Love* to Locomotion, Latin America's all animation channel, as well as to Cartoon Network. Locomotion will feature the film as part of a one-hour programming block designed to showcase animation as art form. "*Monkey Love* fits right in with our concept," said Gustavo Basalo, general manager of Locomotion. "In fact, the reason Locomotion became a reality is that there is an abundance of good animation product of this nature that lacks an outlet for expression."

WB's Hysterically Historical. Warner Bros. has announced an all-new educational animated series for the fall 1998 season.



Disney's *Fun and Fancy Free* features the final performance of Walt Disney as the original voice of Mickey Mouse.

Histeria!, conceived by Warner Bros. resident Tom Ruegger, will be a comedy series designed to educate kids on various periods of history, fitting into the FCC guidelines for educational children's programming. Ruegger will serve as executive producer, and voice talents already cast for the series include Maurice LaMarche, Tress MacNeille, Rob Paulsen and Jeff Glenn Bennett. Warner Bros. has also hired the consulting services of educational media advisor Miki Baumgarten, Ph.D to participate in development.



Warner Bros.' upcoming educational series, *Histeria*.

Entertainment Creating DVD Programming.

Los Angeles-based entertainment company Enteraktion is currently developing several live-action/animation television series for the new high definition television (HDTV) format which will be adopted by broadcasters starting in 1998. The programs being devel-

oped, *Electric Forest*, *Life With Dwegons*, *The Adventures of Captain Sea*, *Professor Winks' Time Link* and *Stories* will use a combination of live actors and 3D virtual sets. "In the near future," said Enteraktion CEO Tom Walsh, "televisions in most homes will be hooked up to the Internet. We intend to be an early provider of both digital television and Internet entertainment."

Home Video

Disney Gets Fun And Fancy Free Again.

Walt Disney Home Video will release Disney's ninth animated feature, *Fun and Fancy Free* on home video this July 15. The restored 1947 film, available for the first time on video, features the last performance of Walt Disney as the voice of Mickey Mouse. The cast of characters also includes Donald Duck, Goofy and Jiminy Cricket, with a soundtrack including musical tracks and narration by Dinah Shore and Edgar Bergen. The limited edition cassette, available for \$26.99, includes a 14 minute documentary of Walt Disney enacting the voice role, and a commemorative

booklet entitled "Walt Disney: The Man and the Mouse."

Manga To Release New Animated Feature.

Coming up in August, Manga Entertainment will release on video *Tokyo Revelation*, a 60 minute animated film by director Osamu Yamazaki. The tape will be available in both English dubbed (\$19.95) and subtitled (\$24.95) versions.

Character News

Bugs Bunny Shows Up On Stamps.

Get 'em while they're hot, Doc! Warner Bros.' classic character Bugs Bunny is going down in history as the first cartoon character to appear on a U.S. postage stamp. The souvenir sheets of ten 32 cent commemorative stamps premiered on May 22, in an edition of 265 million stamps. Bugs has also been enlisted as the spokesbunny for the U.S. Postal Service's Stampers program, aimed at turning kids onto



Bugs Bunny is turning up on 265 million U.S. postage stamps.



Colossal's Factory.

stamp collecting. Children can become a "Stamper" by calling 1-888-STAMP-FUN, to receive comic books, games, a magazine and collector kit. Meanwhile, Bugs Bunny was recently showcased on CARTOON NETWORK in "June Bugs," a 48 hour marathon of Bugs' toons which included a never-before broadcast 1991 short titled "Blooper Bunny."

Marvel To Open Comic-Themed Restaurant.

Marvel Entertainment Group and Planet Hollywood International have teamed up to create Marvel Mania, their flagship comic-themed restaurant at Universal Citywalk at Universal Studios in California. The project was announced to the media (and a



Renegade's Serengeti.

group of very excited school children) at a recent presentation featuring costumed characters and a visit by comic guru Stan Lee, who joked "I'll always get a table at this restaurant!". Scheduled to open in fall 97, Marvel Mania is a 25,000 square foot facility designed to give up to 400 diners the illusion of

being inside a comic book, by means of special effects, decoration, an interactive waiting area, and a giant TV screen showing animation of Marvel characters such as Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk and The X-Men. A second Marvel Mania is slated to open at Universal Studios Florida in the summer of 1998.

Commercials

Spotlight On Spots

Colossal Pictures created a 30 second 2D animated commercial for Coca-Cola through Edge Creative. *Factory*, as it is titled, emulates the style of 1920's "rubber-hose" style black and white animation. "It's a style that comes

out of the naive era of early cartoons," commented spot director and Colossal senior creative director George Evelyn. Now airing nationally in the U.S., the spot also features the handiwork of Charles Gammage Animation and Little Fluffy Clouds. . . **The End** director Sean Sewter animated *Stone Family* and *Dollhouse*, two clay-ani-



A model plan for the new Marvel Mania restaurant.

mated commercials for Culligan International's "Water for Life" ad campaign. Of course, the spots close with the classic cartoon Culligan lady, calling out "Hey, Culligan Man!". . . . **Manhattan**

Transfer designed a broadcast package of station id's, bumpers and opens for Tele-TV Media's new video-on-demand/cable/satellite service debuting in mid-June. . . .

. . . **Blue Sky Studios** created a 30 second 3D computer animated commercial for Rayovac Renewal batteries which brings various battery-operated devices to life as they stand in line to be filled with fresh batteries. Entitled *Filling Station*, the spot was designed and directed by Mark Baldo, and aired heavily in the U.S. in mid-June as part of a Father's Day promotion. . . . **Renegade**

Animation created *Serengeti*, a new 30 second commercial for Cheetos brand snacks featuring the 2D cel animated character Chester Cheetah, combined with live action footage shot by Rhythm & Hues. Darrel Van Citters directed the animation and ink & paint was handled by Virtual Magic. . . .

. **Curious Pictures** created two 15 second commercials for Martini & Rossi vermouth, inspired by 1960's optical art and experimental film. The spots, titled *Bianco* and *Rosso*, are currently airing on televisions around Europe. . . . Curious Pictures also recently completed two 10 second animated



Duck Soup's *Hair Raising Day*.

commercials for British Airways, *Slumbering Moon* (two versions) and *Stop Sign*. Directed by Garrett Sheldrew, the line-animated black and white spots were commissioned after the MC & Saatchi agency was impressed by Sheldrew and Wild Brain's recent Nike spots featuring a cow jumping over the moon. . . . Speaking of which, San Francisco-based **Wild Brain** just took home a Silver Clio award for the above described commercial, *Destination Moon* (see complete list of Clio winners in this edition of Animation World News). Wild Brain also recently signed animator/director Ed Bell, adding his talents to the roster alongside directors Gordon Clark, John Hays, Phil Robinson and Robin Steele. Bell, a veteran of Colossal Pictures, most recently completed directing HBO's animated series *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child*. And Wild Brain also has a new sales representative in Los



Curious Pictures' *Slumbering Moon*.

Angeles, independent rep Darr Hawthorne. . . . Los Angeles-based **Duck Soup Productions** teamed up with director Maureen Selwood to create another line-animated commercial for El Torito restaurants. *Hair Raising Day* is a 30 second spot depicting the restaurant as a

place for people, in this case, two women, to relax over some chips and guacamole to escape the stresses of everyday life. The assistant animator on the job was Jenny Walsh, and the colorist was Isabel Huguera, both former students' of Selwood at California Institute of the Arts. . . . **The Front**, Duck Soup's new media/live-action production arm, recently completed a colorful new animation and live-action commercial for Coca-Cola's Fruitopia beverages. *Origami* (not to be confused with a Hershey's spot of the same name from a few months ago) features color prints of live-action footage scanned and altered in Adobe After Effects, then cut-out by hand and transformed into paper sculptures which were then animated in stop-motion. The agency was Leo Burnett, with a production crew that included director Jamie Caliri, executive producer Nick Bates, producer Darryn Smith and stop-motion director Mark Osborne. . . . New York-based **Magnet Pictures** recently completed *Jekyll & Hyde*, a 30 second animated commercial for the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Protection. The 2D and 3D animated spot portrays a man who throws trash out of a car window, and is literally transformed, a-la-Kafka, into a "litterbug". The

director/designer was George Englebrecht, the key animator was Igor Mitrovic, and the 3D animator was Orlando Robles. . . . New York-based design and animation studio, **Telezign**, recently completed a 3D computer animated movie opening for and in collaboration with HBO. Depicting a water droplet that leads into the HBO logo, the ten second spot will be aired nationally on the HBO cable network and internationally in theaters, as an opener for HBO Pictures' original theatrical programming. Telezign also recently completed several on-air promos for King World's game shows *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy!* Designer/director Jean Shim started with 16mm film then animated it with 2D graphics on a computer.

Vinton Hosts "Camp Animate". Portland-based Will Vinton Studios hosted their second annual "Camp Animate" in late April in Portland. The event brought together an exclusive gathering of 35 ad agency producers for a two-day session of talking and learning about animation with the creatives of Will Vinton Studios, whose efforts in producing commercials have become increasingly high profile with their animated campaigns for M&Ms and Nissan. Attendees included executives from agencies such as Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, Saatchi & Saatchi and J. Walter Thompson. They were treated to tours of the stop-motion and CGI studios, as well as a studio tour of animator Joan Gratz, whose signature clay painting technique is represented commercially by Vinton Studios. On the second day, the guests were given a chance to do some hands-

on animating, the results of which were screened at a brew pub party that night.

Interactive

Activision And Id Continue To Quake. Activision has acquired the worldwide distribution rights to the next interactive game to be released by Id Software, tentatively titled *Quake II*. This follows in the successful footsteps of two *Quake* titles previously produced by Id and released by Activision.

Rugrats Interacting With Broderbund. Characters from Nickelodeon's *Rugrats* will be crawling onto a computer screen near you, in a new series of CD-ROM games being developed with Broderbund Interactive. Scheduled for a 1998 release, the activity-based games will include problem-solving stories and story-based adventures. "Seeing the world from a toddler's point of view has made *Rugrats* a hit animated series" noted Thomas Ascheim, Nickelodeon's vice president of business development, publishing and multimedia. Added Broderbund's vice president and executive publisher Laurie Strand; "The interactive story-based adventure format offers kids an opportunity to explore new environments and solve problems from a Rugrat's point of view, tapping into the elements that make the show such a success." Besides being Nickelodeon's number-one rated television series, and having a newly created line of toys and apparel, *Rugrats* properties will soon include a home video (July 1997) and a theatrical feature film (Fall 1998).

Canadian TV Producers CD-ROM A group of competing independent Canadian producers and distributors recently joined forces to publish a CD-ROM designed to promote Canadian children's properties to overseas developers. *Driving the Future*, produced by the Canadian Film and Television Production Association, and funded by a grant from Bell Canada, is an interactive catalog of about 60 properties from 21 Canadian content providers, including Cinar Films, Paragon Entertainment and Cactus Animation. The CD-ROM is of relatively low quality and slow speed, however, it is available free to broadcasters, distributors, syndicators, co-producers, multimedia software developers and merchandisers from Médialane Communications, (613) 290-1497.

Bethesda To Put Up The Redguard. Maryland-based Bethesda Softworks, a division of Media Technology Limited, has announced the upcoming November 1997 release of *Redguard*, a new CD-ROM game for the PC format. Part of the *Elder Scrolls Adventures* series, the action/adventure game will feature a full rendered 3D environment and characters.

Following EA On The Mpath. Software publisher Electronic Arts has formed a license agreement with Mpath Interactive, an Internet entertainment company. Mpath's online multi-player game service Mplayer (www.mplayer.com), will carry a selection of Electronic Arts multi-player game titles. Electronic Arts, a company which has built its strength on forming strategic alliances, recently announced its

fiscal results for 1996. In a time of consolidation and high competition in the interactive marketplace, EA's revenue were at \$143 million, an increase of 23 percent over the previous year. Recently released action and sports games from EA include *SCARAB*, *Advanced Tactical Fighters*, *Darklight Conflict* and *Theme Hospital*.

Technology

Silicon Graphics Pumps \$4 Million Into Cal Arts. Silicon Graphics Inc. has donated nearly \$4 million worth of hardware and software to the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), in an effort to foster the development of trained digital artists in various disciplines. The equipment includes 23 Indigo workstations, two Onyx2Reality workstations, one Onyx2 InfiniteReality system, as well as Alias/Wavefront PowerAnimator, StudioPaint 3D and Composer software packages. The equipment will be integrated into the Computer Animation Laboratory as well as programs in the Music and Interdisciplinary departments. The Roy Disney Foundation (a major benefactor of the Cal Arts Character Animation department) is contributing toward the costs of installing this new technology, as is Twentieth Century Fox and The Ahmanson Foundation.

Motion Capture Of The Future. Santa Monica Studios research and development division, FutureLight, has developed a new real time optical motion capture system. Three years in development, the system is designed for use in everything from films and TV to interactive applications. FutureLight's director Rob Bredow



Motion actor Bruce Marrs demonstrates FutureLight's optical motion capture system.

explained that what makes this system unique is that it is a wireless, optical recording mechanism which offers real time transfer of motion to a computer generated character, a function which until now has been performed only by magnetic recording systems, which can be cumbersome due to wires and restrictive magnetic fields. The optical system developed by FutureLight places up to 70 points on an actor's body, and records their motions with multiple cameras developed by Northern Digital. Santa Monica Studios and their visual effects division, VisionArt Design & Animation, is currently constructing an \$85 million production facility and have been contracted to use this new motion capture technology for Columbia TriStar's feature remake of *Godzilla*, scheduled for a summer 1998 release.

New 3D Motion Library. Los Angeles-based Blaze Software has released a new library of character animation tools for graphics programmers. The IKaID Library features scripts to apply inverse kinematics, rigid body dynamics to animations, as well as to manage animation challenges such as gravity, inertia and acceleration.

Available on floppy disk for around \$169, IKaID is a C++ library which is compatible with any animation program running on the Windows 95/NT operating system.

Events & Exhibits

Fred Schodt To Speak On Manga. Japanese animation and pop culture expert Fred Schodt will present a talk titled "Dreamland Japan: Comics and Japan's New Visual Culture" on Thursday July 3, 1997 at the Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Airport. Schodt, the author of the book *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, will examine in his talk the manga phenomena, and trace the history of comics up until the explosive global industry it has become today. This event is presented by the Japan America Society (JAS) in association with Stonebridge Press and Anime Expo. Reservations are required, and tickets are \$15 for JAS members, \$25 for non-members and guests. For information call (213) 627-6217 ext 17, before June 27. This issue of *Animation World Magazine* features an interview with Fred Schodt who will discuss the cultural origins of Japan's manga craze.



Artwork from Candy Guard's Pond Life is now on exhibit at MOMI in London.

Animated Residencies & Exhibs At MOMI. London's Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) is now accepting applications for its annual Animators in Residence program. Presented in association with Channel 4, the program will select four recent graduates (within the last 5 years) with "talent and a good idea for an animated film" for a three month residency in the museum's fully-equipped animation studio. A total budget of £4,400 will go towards production of the animators' films, which will be considered for commission by Channel 4's commissioning editor, Clare Kitson. Past participants in the program include Anthony Hodgson, whose *Combination Skin* was subsequently commissioned for Channel 4. The entry deadline is August 22 for the next residency. For an application form, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Yvette Burrows, Animation Administrator, Museum of the Moving Image, BFI on the South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT.

Animators in the residency program work in a glass studio inside the museum, incorporated into the zoetrope-shaped animation display room, as a "live exhibit." What a way to work! In addition to their permanent collection of animation artwork, MOMI has two major animation exhibits on display this summer. Running June 10 through November 11 is "Gerald Scarfe Meets Walt Disney," a collection of designs and illustrations created by Gerald Scarfe for the art direction on Disney's "Hercules," a film which is set for U.K. release this fall. "Candy Guard: Animation Artwork" is a collection of original animation drawings by Candy Guard, an ani-

mator who has received much acclaim lately for her Channel 4 series *Pond Life*.

Festivals

Anima Mundi '97, Brazil. The 5th Edition of South America's only animation festival will take place from August 8-17, 1997 in Rio de Janeiro. Film and video screenings as well as retrospectives, lectures and workshops will be held. Guests from all over the world including David Sproxton, from Aardman Animations, Caroline Leaf and others will join Brazilian talents like Luiz Briquet to participate in this international event. For more information visit the Anima Mundi web site at: <http://www.animamundi.com.br>

Cinanima '97, Portugal. Cinanima '97 will take place in Espinho again this year from November 11-16. The twenty-one year old festival is currently accepting submissions until August 15, 1997. To enter your film, fax the festival at 02.726.015 in order to request rules and entry forms.

Dong-A Lg International Festival Of Comics & Animation, Korea '97. "New Generation, New Trend" is the theme of this Seoul-based festival organized by Dong-A Ilbo and the Seoul Broadcasting System. The event dates run from September 27-October 5, 1997. This annual event promises competitions, galleries, a marketplace, theme song and cartoon drawing contests as well as discussions with creators and a special make-up show. Both animation and comic books will be equally featured. For more

information, take a look at <http://www.donga.com!>

Mendrisio Cartoon, Switzerland. The 3rd Edition of the Swiss International Animated Film Festival will be held November 24-28, 1998. The festival promises a full schedule with short and feature animated film competitions, student films, special 3D computer animation, retrospectives, exhibitions, conferences, workshops, galleries and more. The 2nd Edition drew over 6,500 people over the course of 5 days and included 230 films. If you wish to start planning ahead you can contact them at telephone: 91.646.16.54 or fax: 91.646.53.64.

Belgian Animation Festival In Bulgaria? Yes! Veronique Steeno has organized the first "Belgian Ambassador" animation festival July 4-6, 1997

in Sofia, Bulgaria. The program will include six feature animated films and 43 shorts from Belgium. Over 3,000 students in Bulgaria have been

notified about a prize that will be awarded through this festival, offering

a student one year's education in a Belgian animation school. The event

will be held in the Endeka Cultural Center in Sofia, and is both free and

open to the public. For information, email steeno@be.eunettravel.com, or visit

the web site <http://www.alfaweb.bg>, which will host information on the festival in the coming weeks.

SAS Conference In Utrecht.

The Society for Animation Studies will

present the ninth edition of its annual international conference, October

8-12, 1997 in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Ton Crone, Dr. Ed Tan, and Dr.

William Uricchio of the Netherlands Institute for Animation Film will host

and organize the event in association with Utrecht University and the Vrije

University of Amsterdam. The Raoul Servais Foundation, the Pilot Moscow Animation Studio, and UK's Surrey Institute for Art and Design are also supporting the conference are. The main topics for this conference will be "The Influence of the European Animation Film", "Animation Film and the New Media" and the annual Student Essay Contest.

Anyone wishing to submit a paper (30 minutes) for consideration should send a 250-300 word abstract by June 16 to Ton Crone at crone@niaf.nl. Previously published papers will not be accepted. Last year's SAS conference was held in Wisconsin, USA, and the 1999 edition will be hosted by "Animation Journal" editor Maureen Furniss, at Chapman University in Southern California

For more information about SAS, visit the SAS web site in AWN's Animation Village, at <http://www.awn.com/sas>.

Clermont-Ferrand 98. The Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival will present its 20th anniversary festival January 23-31, 1998 in central

France. For entry forms visit the festival's web site at <http://short-film.gdebussac.fr> or email festival@gdebussac.fr

Hiroshima 98 Scheduled. The biannual Hiroshima International Animation Festival in Japan has scheduled its seventh event for August 20-24, 1998. For information and entry forms, visit the Hiroshima web site accessible through AWN's Animation Village Festivals directory.

Brussels 98 Fest Dates Announced. The next annual Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival is scheduled to take place February 17-March 1, 1998. This non-competitive festival screens over 100 films, and hosts a variety of retrospectives, workshops and exhibitions. The deadline to enter films for consideration is November 1. For information and entry forms, visit the official Brussels web site in AWN's Animation Village
<http://www.awn.com/folioscope/festival>

Awards

Television Ollie Awards. On June 12, the Hollywood Radio & Television Society presented the International Broadcasting Awards' Ollie Awards for "The World's Best Radio and Television Commercials for 1996." Out of 27 categories, the one TV Animation award went to *Brenda & Elaine*, an Acme Filmworks Production directed by Sue Loughlin for Weight Watchers through the Lowe & Partners/SMS agency in New York.

Cartoon Art Museum Presenting Charles M. Schultz Award. On September 13, 1997 the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco will present the first

Charles M. Schultz award to (who else?) Charles Schultz and John Lasseter. Also receiving a special Lifetime Achievement Award will be animation legend Chuck Jones. Tickets to the awards dinner are \$150.00 (\$300 to sit at an honoree's table), the proceeds from which will contribute to the Cartoon Art Museum's education and exhibition funds. For information call (415) 227-8666.

Cinema Expo Honors Disney Execs. The Cinema Expo International, taking place July 2, 1997 in Amsterdam, will honor Walt Disney Company chairman Roy Disney and head of Walt Disney Feature Animation Peter Schneider with the International Creative Achievement Award.

MTV Europe Launches Storyboard Competition. In an attempt to draw young viewers' attention to issues of diversity and discrimination, MTV Europe is announcing a contest where successful candidates will have their films funded by the network. Film makers are invited to submit clear outlines of their ideas in the form of detailed storyboards. Winners will receive funding for production as well as a chance of additional prize moneys. MTV hopes to encourage animators to use their skills to create shorts that will act as a "call-to-action" for young people and alert them to issues such as Aids and HIV, racism and prejudice, political awareness, human rights, the environment and more. These films will be added to MTV's already extensive "Free Your Mind" campaign. For more information contact Peter Dougherty or Anna Chacko in the Creative & On-Air Department of MTV Europe at telephone

44.(0)171.284.7644/7575 or fax 44.(0)171.284.7857.

Answer Cartoon's Call. The European Union is launching a call to European animators everywhere. Cartoon is looking for animated shorts that will promote the Euro, the future European currency. The Union is hoping that the series will appeal to a wide audience in order to help the population cope with the upcoming currency change. This huge promotional project promises that the top 30 entries will receive honorariums. The deadline is August 15, 1997. For more information contact Carine Hacquart at telephone 32.2.245.12.00 or fax 32.2.245.46.89.

1997 Clio Awards. The Annual Clio Award Winners were announced in late May. "Honoring advertising excellence worldwide" the awards in the Television/Cinema - Animation category were:

Gold Award

Toys
Advertiser: Nissan
Advertising Agency: Chiat/Day, Venice
Production Studio: Will Vinton Studios; Portland, Smile Films; Santa Monica, Portland, Santa Monica,
Animation Company: Will Vinton Studios, Portland
Director: Mark Gustafson, Kink Usher
Animator: Chuck Duke, Jeff Mulcaster, Jerold Howard, Si Tran

Silver Awards

Destination Moon

Advertiser: NIKE
Advertising Agency: Wieden & Kennedy, Portland
Production Studio: Wild Brain, Inc., San Francisco
Animation Company: Wild Brain, Inc., San Francisco
Director: Gordon Clark

Virtual Andre

Award: Silver
Advertiser: NIKE
Advertising Agency: Wieden & Kennedy, Portland
Production Studio: RSA/USA, Los Angeles
Animation Company: Digital Domain, Venice
Director: Allan Van Rijn

Citroen ZX - Les Poils (The Hairs)

Advertiser: Citroen 2x
Advertising Agency: EURO RSCG SCHER LAFARGE, Paris
Production Studio: Lambie-Nairn Directors, London
Animation Company: Tandem Films/The Mill, London
Director: Harry Dorrington
Computer Graphics Animators: Laurent Hugienot, Alison Leaf

Appliances

Advertiser: Saturn-GM EV1
Production Studio: Industrial Light + Magic, San Rafael
Animation Company: Industrial Light + Magic, San Rafael
Animator: Marc Chu, Tim Stevenson, Izzy Acar, Steve Rawlins
Lead Animator: Paul Griffin

Statue

Production Studio: Independent Films, Sydney
Animation Company: Garner MacLennan Design, Sydney
Director: Peter Cherry
Animator: Andrew Hellen, Simon Brewster, Peter Coleman, Kit Devine, Larry Townsend, Tim

Quarry, Warren Sheppard
Visual Effects Director: Paul Butterworth

Bronze Awards

Variations on a Theme

Advertiser: Levi's For Women
Advertising Agency: Foote Cone & Belding, San Francisco
Production Studio: Susan Young, Ltd., London
Animation Company: Susan Young, Ltd., London
Director: Susan Young
Animator: Susan Young

Metal Man

Advertiser: University of Washington School of Public Health
Advertising Agency: Elgin DDB, Seattle
Production Studio: Elgin DDB, Seattle
Animation Company: Olive Jar Animation, Boston
Director: Shari Burk
Animator: Olive Jar Animation

Up...Down...Up

Advertiser: Mainstay Mutual Funds
Advertising Agency: Working Class, New York
Production Studio: Wild Brain, Inc., San Francisco
Animation Company: Wild Brain, Inc., San Francisco
Director: John Hays
Animator: Jerry Van De Beek, Jim Sloyen
CGI: Little Fluffy Clouds, San Francisco

The Bears

Advertiser: Pepsi Cola Co./Pepsi
Advertising Agency: BBDO, New York
Production Studio: PYTKA, Venice, CA
Animator: Johnnie Semerad

Jungle

Advertiser: Electrolux
Advertising Agency: Bartle Bogle Hegarty, London
Production Studio: Partizan Midi Minit, London
Animation Company: Buf, Paris
Director: Eric Coignoux

Big Deal

Advertiser: Bell Atlantic Telephone
Advertising Agency: Draft Direct, New York
Production Studio: Blue Sky Studios, Inc.
Animation Company: Blue Sky Studios, Inc., Harrison
Director: Carlos Saldanha
Animator: Ed Gavin, Steve Talkowski, Aimee Whiting

For a complete listing of winners refer to the Clio website: www.clioawards.com

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Mail: Animation World Magazine
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Phyllis Craig: A Woman of Many Colors (1929-1997)

Phyllis Craig was Film Roman's much beloved Color Design Supervisor and Internship Coordinator. She passed away quite suddenly on May 18, 1997 a few days after surgery for a brain tumor. Phyllis was a 45 year veteran of the animation industry. She started in 1952 at Disney as a painter on *Peter Pan*. She then moved to the color key department for *Sleeping Beauty* and worked with the first xerox camera for *101 Dalmatians*. Starting in 1964, she took time off to raise her three children, Randy, Brian and Kelly. She then rejoined the animation industry working for Hanna-Barbera, Marvel and lastly Film Roman where she headed the color key department. At Film Roman she worked on *Garfield and Friends*, *The Critic*, *Bobby's World*, *The Mask*, and many, many other series. In 1993 she was the first color key artist honored with an Annie Award nomination for Outstanding Individual Achievement in the Field of Animation from ASIFA-Hollywood for her work on the feature *Tom & Jerry: The Movie*.

Phyllis also created art galleries to showcase fine art by animation professionals. She was an inspiration to many young art students. She managed both Film Roman's and The Television Academy's internship programs, spoke at schools, provided tours and single handedly introduced many, many



Phyllis with the Emmy award Film Roman won for the *Garfield* special, *Babes in Bullets*.

students to jobs within the industry. A founding member of Women In Animation and an active member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Phyllis was also President of the National Student Film Institute. In 1990, she received the Grimmy Award from the Los Angeles Student Film Institute for her devotion and service to animation education.

In memory of Phyllis Craig, Film Roman dedicated its in-house art gallery to her memory. The dedication ceremony took place on July 11 in conjunction with the opening reception for an exhibition of art work by animation legend Bill Justice.

Two other memorials to Phyllis have also been dedicated in the form of scholarships. You may con-

tact the below organizations for further information or to donate a contribution.

Women In Animation
Phyllis Craig Memorial Scholarship Fund
Phyllis Craig Scholarship Fund for Youth Interested in the Art of P.O. Box 17706
Animation

Encino, CA 91416
Animagination Festival
Attn: Rita Street, President
Children's Services Department
818-759-9596
DCFS Office of Special Events

550 S. Vermont #500

Los Angeles, CA 90020

Attn: Greg Kilpatrick

213-351-6478

"The impression she made on all of us at Film Roman will warm our hearts forever." - Phil Roman

Following are a collection of thoughts and remembrances from Phyllis' closest friends and colleagues.

"The first time I met Phyllis was in 1987 and I was immediately impressed by her energy and enthusiasm. That was the year she joined Film Roman. I am so

pleased that this is the place where she chose to work for the next ten years. I cannot imagine this studio without Phyllis Craig and the influence she had on all of us.

Phyllis' love of and dedication to the animation industry was undaunted as she put her heart and soul into this business for more than 45 years. Her enthusiasm was contagious and as busy as we would often get, Phyllis always had the time to get involved in other worthwhile projects. She always had time for other people, especially 'her kids.' Phyllis is best known for 'her kids,'

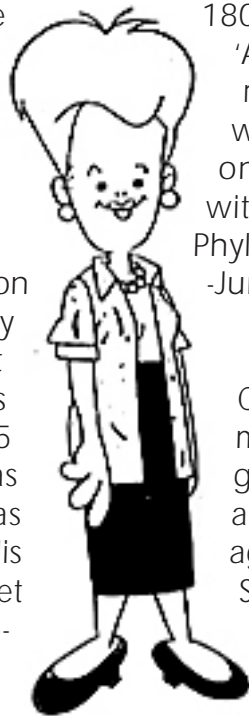
or the Interns she brought into the studio to help launch their careers. They are her greatest reward and the reason she earned the title "studio Mom". She offered guidance and support to so many young students, and her willingness to listen touched each of their lives on a personal level.

There is no question that Phyllis Craig's energy, her capacity for giving and her constant smile will be sorely missed. The impression she made on all of us at Film Roman will warm our hearts forever."

-Phil Roman

President and CEO
Film Roman

"Phyllis Craig was indefatigable in her dedication to art, whether it was initiating galleries, introducing the talent of young artists, lecturing or even preparing delectable food for receptions. No matter what endeavor, she was always in attendance with an aura of love, enthusiasm and gaiety. A quote from William Wadsworth's



A caricature of Phyllis Craig by Mitch Schauer, used in an actual episode of Film Roman's *Garfield and Friends*.

1807 poem comes to mind. 'And then my heart with rapture fills and dances with the daffodils.' If anyone could and did dance with the daffodils, it was Phyllis Craig."

-June Foray

"What is a Phyllis Craig? To me she was a mentor and a friend. She gave me a chance to learn a new field. She encouraged me to great heights. She was the most kind, considerate and passionate person I knew.

Always here and always caring about all her studio "kids".

We went to movies, theater concerts, shared lots of meals, and many glasses of White Zinfandel together. I always looked for anything turquoise to buy her as that was her signature color. I also kept

an eye out for her colored knee socks, another Phyllis trademark. When I introduced her to my crowd, she always corrected me because I would say "This is Phyllis, my boss," and she would say "Hello, I'm Phyllis, Debbie's friend!" I'll always be especially grateful for the kindness she showed me and my family when my father was ill and passed away. There she was, at my mom's house, to comfort me.

"Phyllis was simply wonderful."
- Libby Reed

If there is a heaven, I'm sure Phyllis is there 'dressed to the T' with her favorite pin and matching socks, painting the sky turquoise, while drinking a glass of white Zinfandel and listening to big band music.

There is a big hole left in my heart, for I have lost a dear sweet friend."

-Debbie Mark
Color Key, Film Roman



A newspaper article profiling Phyllis' "Touch of the Orient" art show at the Film Roman Gallery, now being dedicated as the Phyllis Craig Gallery..

"It's hard to believe that Phyllis left us so suddenly. Her effervescence, her strength and energy seemed to be everlasting. How lucky I am to have been her friend. We met at the Walt Disney Studios many years ago. Her enthusiasm for the animation industry was apparent from the very beginning. The studio recognized her abilities and trained her in many departments. She was a valued employee and was an asset to a new industry. Phyllis never claimed to be an artist but she knew the art of making

friends. She became an art patron, promoting, pushing and prodding artists to greater heights.

When Grim Natwick passed away, Phyl was called upon to evaluate his art collection. It was with the expertise of an old pro that she went through the stacks of his work. I was amazed at how professional this young girl had become.

Phyllis and her husband were ardent sailors, who soon became expert in handling boats and during their vacation times traveled the West Indies and the South Seas. They were always into new ventures whether it was raising a family, buying boats, running a restaurant or maintaining an art gallery they worked together. It was an enviable life.

Phyllis was responsible for promoting art shows at Hanna-Barbara, Hollywood Way, Toluca Lake, and Film Roman Studios, and was always interested in new talent.

It was typical of Phyllis to keep any hardships or sorrows to herself. We would, as friends, love to have protected that smiling, wise-cracking friend from some of the blows of life, but she would have none of that. Oh, we shall miss that gall! Truly with sorrow, and love,
Grace Godino



Phyllis as a little girl.

"In 1972, Phyllis Craig was working as a final checker for Fred Calvert Productions. The studio was working on a picture and the deadline for which was fast approaching. There were scenes being painted and many more that needed checking.

I had been recommended to Phyllis and was hired to help in finishing the picture. I had done painting at home for years, but all the checking I had done had been inside the studios. Yet, Phyllis gave me about ten scenes to take home as a start.

All of the scenes were marked, but there were some questions about the animation. Phyllis was so helpful and so patient with my questions and each time I brought a batch of scenes back, she always complimented and encouraged me on my work. She took time from her frantic schedule to go over each scene with me.

I only worked with her for a period of two months, but it was one of the best experiences I had in the over 53 years I spent in the animation business.

Over the years that followed, I crossed paths with Phyllis many times. I was not surprised to learn how helpful she had been to many other people, most of them young people wanting to start an animation career.

I am sure that I and everyone who knew and came in contact with Phyllis will miss her greatly."

-Martha Sigall

"The one memory I will always have of Phyllis, or the 'Studio Mom' as we came to call her, is that she was always there when I needed



Phyllis at work in the color key department at Film Roman.

her. She helped bring me into this business, and as an intern I could turn to her with any question. Later, as I established myself in my career, it remained a comfort to know that she was still always around for me. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to know her."

-Lance Kramer

Assistant Director, *The Simpsons*
Film Roman

"Phyllis Craig was to the animation world what Florence Nightengale was to the medical one." - Marija Miletic-Dail

"I owe my career to Phyllis. She gave me my professional start and did a lot of good for so many people like myself. She was such a wonderful person. I will be indebted to her forever and will miss her terribly."

-Bert Kline

Animator, *Mulan*

Walt Disney Feature Animation

"I know that I'm not alone when I say that Phyllis was not only the single most influential person in my animation career, but also the most generous, kind and supportive mentor a person could ever hope for. Because of Phyllis' big heart, instincts, and open arms, dozens of 'punk kids' like



Phyllis Craig with friend Dave Master.

myself were given an opportunity in a business where we otherwise might have never made it through the front door. Even long after getting my dream-job on *The Simpsons*, she continued to encourage, comfort and support me inside and outside the door of Film Roman.

Phyllis' passing is not only a loss to the existing industry, but also to the many kids who hadn't yet made it to her door. We can only admire and aspire to her generosity and faith in young artists, and remember the woman who made our dreams come true."

-Brad Abelson

Character Layout Artist, *The Simpsons*
Film Roman

"I was one of the many artists who worked in animation that Phyllis encouraged and promoted in her Craig Gallery in 1985. She featured monthly receptions, always with clever themes that were unique to each artist, and served tasty refreshments to make each show special.

My favorite of course was 'A Touch of the Orient' - combining the talents of Jake Lee's watercolors, Betty Darwins Chinese brush paintings, Marceil Ferguson with her Japanese koi paintings and bonsai trees, and my watercolors of China.

Both artists and guests complemented Phyllis in her beautiful kimono. It was a real tribute to her ingenuity and enthusiasm!

To be her friend for many years is special—to work with her at Film Roman studio the last few years a real joy."

- With Love, Barbara Sandifer Schade

"Phyllis' passion for life and animation inspired thousands. The day I met Phyllis, I was so impressed and inspired by her, I knew I wanted to be a part of the animation industry. She helped me get my first job here at Film Roman and I am forever thankful to her."

-Alex Ruiz

Character Layout Artist, *The Simpsons*
Film Roman

"We can only admire and aspire to her generosity and faith in young artists, and remember the woman who made our dreams come true."
- Brad Abelson

"Phyllis Craig was to the animation world what Florence Nightingale was to the medical one. She'll be remembered in legendary terms by her industry and in saintly terms by her friends and family."

-Marija Miletic-Dail

Producer/Director, Universal Cartoon Studios

"Phyllis has been my friend since I was 19, at Disney. She was my mentor before the word was invented, and my social director. She was EVERYONE's mentor,

social director and friend. Phyllis was simply wonderful."

-Libby Reed

Color Key, Film Roman

"I was a friend of Phyllis Craig for 42 years. I have worked in the animation field all these years with Phyllis. For the last 20 years I have been a producer/director at Marvel Studios, Hanna-Barbera, Graz Productions, and Prince Valiant (now Hearst Productions).

We each had three children—two boys and one girl for both of us. As our children were growing up, we spent many happy times together on weekend outings and also vacations.

I've had to sit and think about why I've procrastinated so long in writing this letter. It wasn't until this moment that I knew the answer. It is short. It's because I'm mad! I am angry that Phyllis isn't with us anymore. She was much too vibrant, loving and full of life to be struck down the way she was. She was planning her next vacation which would have been a trip to Greece. I had lunch with Phyl, Libby, and Barbie Schade the week before she collapsed. She was so weak I had to lift her in and out of the chair....and she was still working every day. I don't know how she did it! She said at the time there was something wrong with her brain, that it wasn't working right. We tried to assure her that it was just the shock of having broken both wrists at the same time. [Phyl had broken both wrists when she fell while jitterbugging.] Little did we know, life is so fragile. 'In the midst of life, we are in death.' We all miss her terribly."

- Gwen Wetzler

Producer/Director

A Tribute to Jerry Smith (1936-1997): World Ambassador

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Jerry Smith started in animation as a cameraman in 1956 at Cartoon Camera. In 1957 he began as a cameraman on Hanna-Barbera's first series, *Rough and Ready*. In 1972 he began to do what would make him famous, creating television animation studios. He began by setting up Hanna-Barbera, Australia and went on in 1978 to set up and supervise Cuckoo's Nest (James Wang Films) in Taipei. He then set up and operated Hahn Ho for Steve Hahn in Korea. Take One Animation Photography in Burbank was the next studio which he created and operated. In 1981 he created another full production facility in Korea that operated until 1985 producing shows for Hanna-Barbera, Ruby-Spears, Sepp and others. In 1986 Jerry was sent by Mr. Hanna to Manila, Philippines in order to establish Hanna-Barbera's own production facility, Fil-Cartoons, Inc. and he ran this facility of over 800 employees until 1994.

Besides this incredible career, Jerry also lead an adventurous life. He flew planes. He raced cars. He was a true entrepreneur, having even started a prawn farm. Married at seventeen to Delores Detzler, Jerry had three children, first a daughter Kathy and then two boys, Terry and Larry. Both sons work in anima-

tion and were trained by their father. Jerry married four more times. When he passed away he left his wife, Madieline "Madie" who resides in the Philippines, his three children and six grand-



Jerry Smith.

children.

Following are a collection of thoughts and remembrances from Jerry's closest friends and colleagues.

"One of our cartoon industries 'Greats' is gone. Jerry Smith passed away Monday morning, April 28, 1997. Jerry was with his family in Tennessee when he died.

I have certainly known, loved

and respected Jerry for many, many years. We worked together in our camera department here at Hanna-Barbera Studios many times. Not only was he one of the best cartoon cameramen that ever lived, he knew the cartoon business from A to Z. Jerry worked with me in Australia and Manila.

Jerry was a great guy to work with, intelligent, hard working and fun. He was always my good friend and truly a decent human being.

Jerry contributed so much to our cartoon industry, that he will be missed one way or another by every remaining person in this industry."

-Bill Hanna
Co-Chairman, Founder -
Hanna-Barbera Cartoons

"Jerry will be missed by a multitude of friends and associates throughout the industry and around the world, for Jerry was a pioneer in what we now call international production. Over the years Jerry established studios in Taiwan, Korea and the Philippines as well as building several stateside operations. Most of the overseas studios were true startups when these countries did not have an established industry in place. Not an easy task, I assure you.

No man worked harder and very few understood the business of



One of Jerry's favorite pastimes was sportscar racing.

animation production as well as Jerry Smith. Others of us who were in the same line always felt that we were a few steps behind and we constantly feared that he would out-work us or out-fox us — and he usually did.

Jerry was a man who knew what he was about. He had vision and strength and was from the old school. He believed 'If you want something done right, do it yourself!' I remember attending a party a number of years ago that Jerry had given at his home in Manila. The home was large and perhaps several hundred people were having a wonderful time. A band was playing as people danced and

clock Jerry announced that he had to excuse himself as he and the group of men had to return to the studio to finish camera on a show that had to be shipped. I asked Jerry before he left why he felt compelled to desert his own party. Didn't he trust the crew to finish the show? He smiled and told me that as he had to ask his camera crew not to drink at the party, he promised them he would also abstain and go with them to shoot camera. I thought, 'This is pure Jerry Smith', in charge of probably the largest animation studio in the world at that time and he's going to personally shoot camera all night to insure a show gets out on schedule...

Dozens of stories come to me now about Jerry, and I wish I had time to tell each and every one of them. We used to say that if Bill Hanna wanted to open a studio in the Amazon rain forest, he would parachute Jerry in with a screwdriver and a roll of camera tape and the place would be set up in a month — two, if he wanted layouts done there!

He was a rare kind of fellow, a competent and honest man who lived his life on his own terms. He

drank cold San Miguel beer and talked around the pool. As the evening wore on I noticed that Jerry and a group of young men were resolutely sober and serious despite the evening's gaiety. At eleven o'

left us too soon and I, along with many others, will miss him."

-Milt Vallas

Independent Animation Consultant, who has known

Jerry for the past forty years as both friend and competitor

"Jerry contributed so much to our cartoon industry, that he will be missed one way or another by every remaining person in this industry." - Bill Hanna

"Jerry Smith - one of the enduring characters of animation and one of the first worldwide ambassadors. Jerry was without a doubt one of the key people in taking American animation to the world and finding ways to produce in many countries. Over the years he became the adopted son of Bill Hanna. It was Jerry who often led the charge for Bill or followed behind to make it work for Bill whether it was Spain, Australia, Korea, Taiwan and eventually the Philippines.

Jerry will be long remembered for his never ending commitment to the industry, his entrepreneurial flair in many countries, often in difficult circumstances, lead him to produce a product for a worldwide audience. The legacy of Jerry lives on in his children. It has been my pleasure to work with his son Terry who is every inch his father's son. Jerry will be missed but his contribution lives on."

- Neil Balnaves

Southern Star Group Limited,
ACN

"One does not run into a person like Jerry Smith too often. He was



Jerry in his first sportscar, 1939.



Jerry's first trip from Los Angeles to Tennessee in his own plane.

very unique. Although Jerry was quiet and calm, he was one of the most energetic men I have ever known. He lived five lives in his lifetime, because he lived life to the fullest.

"Jerry Smith - one of the enduring characters of animation and one of the first worldwide ambassadors." - Neil Balnaves

Many people would be happy to accomplish a fraction of the things Jerry did in his lifetime. Among Jerry's achievements, he owned and operated prawn farms, as well as an air cargo/courier service. He also drove racing cars, but his greatest accomplishment was being the co-founder and operator of Fil Cartoons, one of the world's largest animation studios. Based in the Philippines, Fil-Cartoons employs hundreds of talented people and has produced over a 1,000,000 feet of animation.

Hanna-Barbera cartoons and Fil-Cartoons were partners, and as a producer and through this asso-

ciation, I had the privilege to know and work with this gentleman. Although the two studios were separated by an ocean, it was really one studio. Jerry was loved and respected by everybody on both continents. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him."

-Davis Doi
Supervising Producer,
Hanna-Barbera
Cartoons

"I must admit that I was happy and proud to be asked to write this piece on Jerry Smith, but the responsibility and the recognition of the difficulty in representing the essence of the man quickly sobered the moment. It is important to understand that Jerry was a very private person. ...a quiet achiever.

It is the animation part of Jerry's and my life that crossed and it is from this aspect that I hope I am qualified to comment and trust that Jerry would agree and approve.

It was only three months ago that Jerry, his wife Madie and I were sitting in a hotel bar in Manila over a few drinks. Jerry was successful by any definition of the word, yet the unassuming qualities of the man would never allow him to wear the trappings of that success. Jerry was the one who would travel econo-

my class when he could easily afford first class, he would drive the oldest car in the fleet (very fast I might add), and would always prefer beer to champagne.

Above all, the thing that I remember most about Jerry is his wicked sense of humor. I think his sense of humor and timing put everything in context for him. You could be in the most stressful and dramatic situation and then, Jerry would save the moment with a throwaway comment and that cheeky Jerry Smith smirk.

I am assured by those that were close to him in his final days that his sense of humor stayed until the end...I wouldn't have expected it any other way! Jerry will long be remembered around the globe by literally thousands of people and their families that have him to thank for their careers and their livelihood; he has given them a future and this is the legacy that will assuredly live on.

We take our hat off to you Jerry, you'll be sorely missed by many!"

-Wayne Dearing
CEO, Philippine Animation



Left to right, Jerry with his sons Terry and Larry, both of whom were trained in the animation industry by their father.



A young Jerry Smith (1946).

Group

much. I say, he should! He worked hard for it. He was from the working class. He rolled up his sleeves, got his feet wet and worked late nights shooting camera or viewing retakes with the production crew. He didn't just delegate. So yes, he did earn a lot. He earned a lot of friends, loyalty and respect.

I thought that I could not write a tribute for Jerry because when he died, a big chunk of me died with him. Then I remembered how I used to tell Jerry that someday I will be able to repay him for all the things he's done for me. And I think this is the right time to do that. I love you, friend."

-Jo Harn

"I met Jerry Smith in the Philippines in 1985 and my life has never been the same since. He told me his life story and it inspired me. He taught me everything I needed to know about animation and this experience paved the way for me and my family to live in California. So I can say that I am where I am because I met Jerry.

Jerry worked hard and played hard. He made a choice to be positive with life. He never turned away from hardship and any obstacle. He had focus, intelligence, and vast knowledge of the animation business. He recognized everyone's effort and was compassionate to his employees. He loved his job.

He also had good business sense. Some say he earned too

"I first met Jerry Smith in the late '80s when I began as Senior Vice-President of Production for Hanna-Barbera Cartoons. Jerry was running Fil-Cartoons at the time and we immediately hit it off. Jerry was a real pro. He could tell you the exact situation, what the problems were, where they were, how to solve them and how long it would take. There were no politics, no games, just answers with Jerry. He would always deliver by finding resourceful ways to solve problems. Sometimes in Manila there will be power outs, so Jerry hooked up a diesel generator so the studio would always have power and he is famous for using the motors from normal household drills to use in automating animation cameras! Jerry was special because he didn't forget his roots. He started as

a cameraman and even when he was running the entire studio if a deadline was in jeopardy he would roll up his sleeves and shoot until midnight to get the show got done. Then he'd go home for a few hours, take a shower and show back up at the studio a few hours later. That to me is a true professional. As you grow you tend to forget about the people in the trenches and Jerry never did that. That's what Jerry Smith stands for in this business."

-Paul Sabella

Executive Producer, MGM Animation

"We used to say that if Bill Hanna wanted to open a studio in the Amazon rain forest, he would parachute Jerry in with a screwdriver..." - Milt Vallas

"Jerry Smith. I called him a 'humanoid' upon witnessing a night of filming one of my shorts—all 98 scenes shot with the precision of a Swiss watch, rolling his chair from a stack of cels to camera -click!- back to cels, to camera, -click!- back to cels... It was like watching a fine choreography of a ballet. And he did all of that without a single mistake! I hope God puts him to good use within the chaos of the Universe."

-Marija Miletic-Dail

Producer/Director, Universal Cartoon Studios



DESERT ISLAND SERIES

On A Desert Island With... Comic Informants

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Sticking with this issue's theme of comics and animation, we asked a mixed bag of people for their lists of favorites.

We asked Ben Edlund, creator of *The Tick*, and Bill Plympton, cartoonist, animator and creator of *Plymptoons*, for their favorite comic books. While these two started in comics, and periodically return to comics, both are now primarily working in the field of animation. Now, since Stan Lee, is *the* comic industry veteran, creator of Spider-Man, The Hulk and many other classic characters, we asked him what his favorite animated films were (what do you think he'd pick if we'd asked him for his comic book faves!?!). Finally, we asked Jerry Beck, animation historian and animation industry development executive, to pick his favorite new comic book up and comers. Maybe one day we'll be watching one of their shows... If any of these folks get stranded on a desert island, we now know what to put in their care packages!



Ben Edlund's favorite comics:

1. *8-Ball* by Daniel Clowes.
2. *Acme Novelty Library* by Chris Ware.
3. *Replacement God* by Zander Cannon.
4. *The Watchman* by Alan Moore & David Gibbons.
5. Assorted 1970s *Richie Rich* comic books.
6. *Little Nemo in Slumberland* by Winsor McCay.

Bill Plympton's top ten comic books:

1. The work of Winsor McCay.
2. *Body Bags* by Jason Pearson.
3. *Hard Boiled* by Frank Miller and Geoff Darrow.
4. *Sin City* by Frank Miller.
5. The work of Saul Steinberg.
6. The work of R. Crumb.
7. The work of Gary Larsen.
8. *Calvin & Hobbes* by Bill Waterson.
9. *Dilbert* by Scott Adams.
10. The work of A.B. Frost.



(continues)

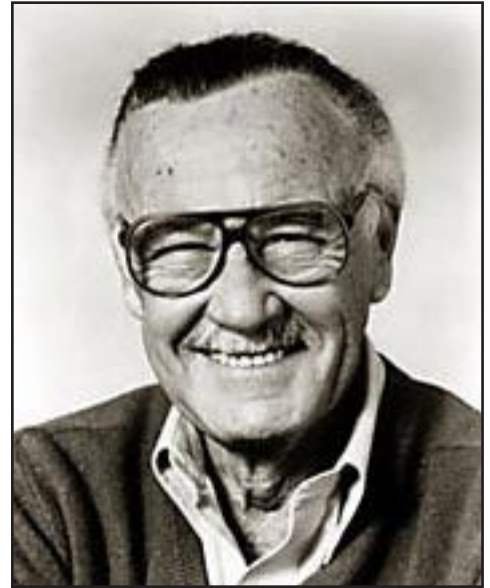
Stan Lee's favorite animated films:

"That is a tough question because I love most of the great animated films from over the years, mostly the Disney stuff. I would probably pick these Disney films as my favorites:"

1. *Dumbo*.
2. *Snow White*.
3. *Pinocchio*.
4. *The Lion King*.
5. *Bambi*.
6. Of course, *Fantasia*, which has to be one of the all-time greats.

"Beyond that, there are other types of animation I'd want to have with me. Believe it or not, I really like *Beavis and Butt-head* and *The Simpsons*, so I wouldn't mind having episodes from those shows with me. Then, of course, I would have to have some Marvel super heroes with me, as much stuff from the *Spider-Man* and *X-Men* cartoons as possible. But if I bring all these shows with me, somebody better make sure I have a VCR!"

(Editor's Note: We knew he'd sneak Marvel in there.)



Jerry Beck's selected comic artists:

"Off the top of my head, my favorite contemporary cartoonists are:

1. Mike Allread (*Madman*).
2. Geoff Darrow (*Big Guy*).
3. Chris Ware (*Acme Comics Library*)
4. Jeff Smith (*Bone*).
5. Cathy Hill (*Mad Raccoons*)

All of them have been drawing comics for a while now though, so I don't know if they qualify as "up and coming." I'd also throw in:

6. animator Bruce Timm (who occasionally draws a *Batman* comic book)

7. John K., Jim Smith and the gang at Spümcö who are doing a magazine called *Comic Book*.

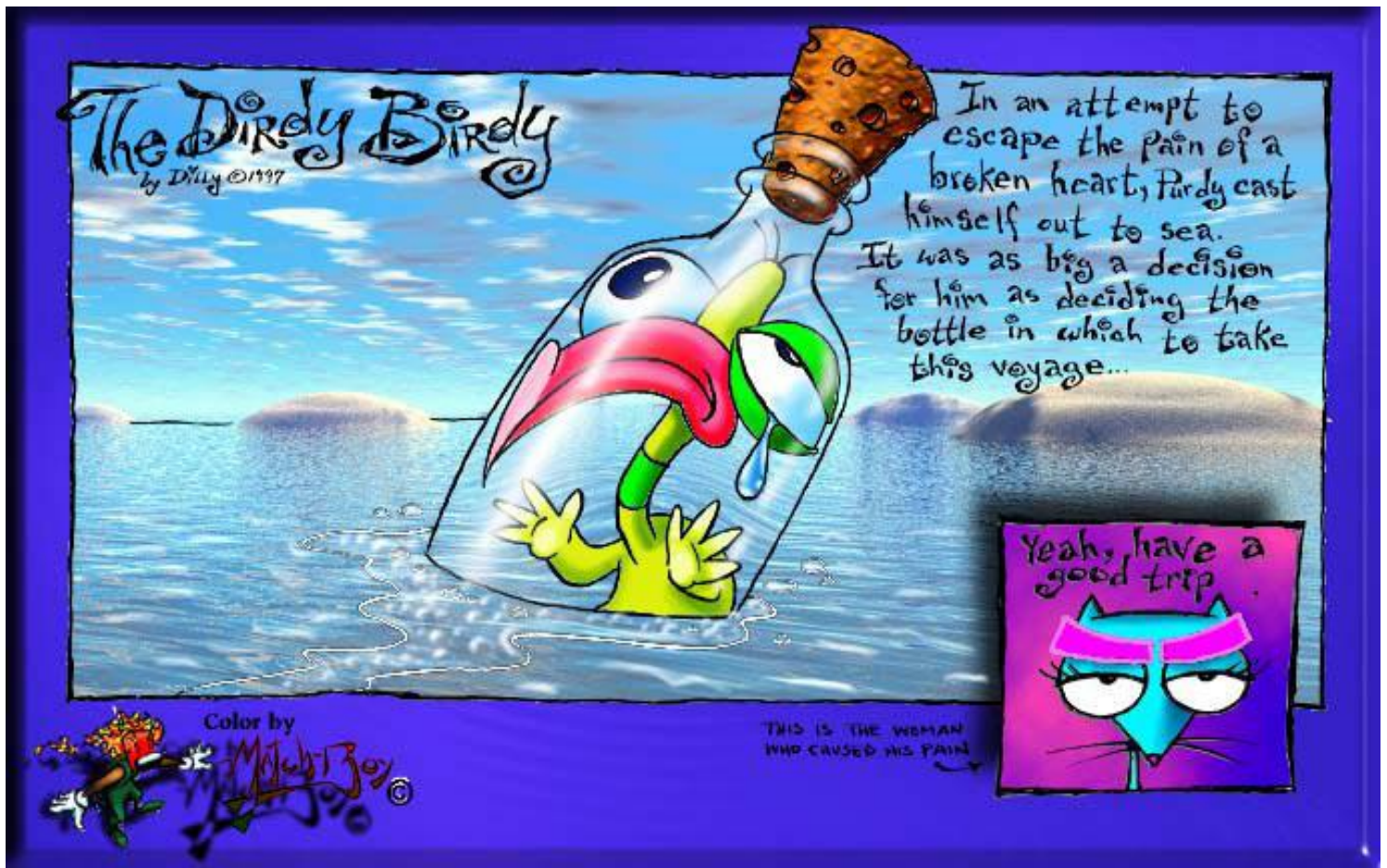
And I still love R. Crumb's new stuff."



What comic books would you want to have with you on a desert island? We'd like to know. Send your top ten picks to editor@awn.com. Please write "desert island" in the subject heading of your email message.



AWN Comics



The Dirty Birdy by John R. Dilworth

Highlights from the August Issue...

This issue pursues the many expanding facets of the exploding computer animation field. We will discuss not only the latest in digital technology, but meet the animators and studios who are bridging the gap between technology and art. John Whitney and his early computer animation work will be presented by William Moritz. Guionne Leroy will discuss her unique claymation project which was shot using a digital camera. Philippe Moins will interview Ben Stassen and New Wave Entertainment and Sean Murch will profile Mainframe Studios. We will also discover where computer animation is being done outside of Western Europe and North America and delve into the visual effects debate regarding reality vs. fantasy shots. Industry leaders will also reveal how they keep their studios current with today's ever changing technology.

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Television	(September)
Licensing & Merchandising	(October)
Home Video	(November)
